RUTH GOODMAN ON THE HISTORY IN OUR HOMES

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING FAMILY HISTORY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 219 JULY 2024

WHO DO YOU THINK [illegible]RE?®

MEDIEVAL RECORDS GO BACK 600 YEARS

10 TIPS TO FIND BAPTISM RECORDS

Our complete guide will give you the expert tools to track down your ancestors' births

SCOTTISH ROOTS
All the resources you need to find your Strathclyde kin

My Dad was a WW2 love-child, but I identified his father using DNA

PRAIRIE LIFE Trace family who were enticed to settle in Canada

DEATH AND TAXES How life's two certainties can smash brick walls

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- Britain's beach huts
- Create a BMD database
- A register of prisoners

DISCOVER THE WHOLE PICTURE

When you explore your family tree, you find names, dates and places. But it's the extra details that truly reveal your family story.

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Welcome

Sarah's Top Tip

Be flexible with the age of a relative when searching for a baptism record

One of the points made by Chris Paton in his excellent article about baptism brick walls is that people weren't always baptised around the time they were born. I have a family in my tree who got all four of their children baptised at once (I wonder if the church had been chasing them). Websites encourage users to search with a specific date parameter, but, as with all searches, if you can't find someone you think should be there, try removing age or event dates and see what happens. Chris' unmissable six-page guide begins on **page 14**.

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One of the most common queries emailed to our 'Q&A' inbox (*wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk*) is from readers struggling to locate a birth record for an ancestor. It can be the missing link that cuts off a whole branch of your family tree. Turn to **page 14** if you want to understand why you may not be able to find a baptism record, and pick up some handy tracing tips that you may not have considered before.

I really enjoyed talking to Ruth Goodman this month about her latest podcast series *The Curious History of Your Home* (**page 20**). She's passionate about understanding and exploring the past that ordinary people experienced, and that's something that resonates with me as a family historian. Of course, many of the 'ordinary people' in our family trees did extraordinary things, such as the pioneers who set off to forge new lives on the Canadian Prairies (**page 29**) or those, like reader David Hough's grandfather, who survived the horrors of the trenches during the First World War (**page 24**).

Thankfully, life wasn't all hardship for our forebears, and we reveal the history of beach huts on **page 52**. My grandparents had a friend with a beautiful blue hut in Southwold which we used to use on our summer holidays. I can almost smell it now with its sandy buckets and salty damp towels hanging up to dry. Here's to the summer!

Sarah

Sarah Williams Editor
sarah.williams@ourmedia.co.uk

Contributors

Chris Paton
Chris is a genealogy educator who also offers a research service (see **scotlandsgreatestory.wordpress.com**). He shares his expert advice for finding baptism records on **page 14**.

Debbie Kennett
Nick Peers, who usually writes our 'Tech Tips' articles, is taking a month off, so Debbie has stepped in to explain how to create a BMD database with free websites (**page 50**).

Paul Blake
Paul is the author of numerous books and articles on family history, and on **page 38** demonstrates the use of death-duty records that are often overlooked by family historians.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/A BABY GIRL, c1950

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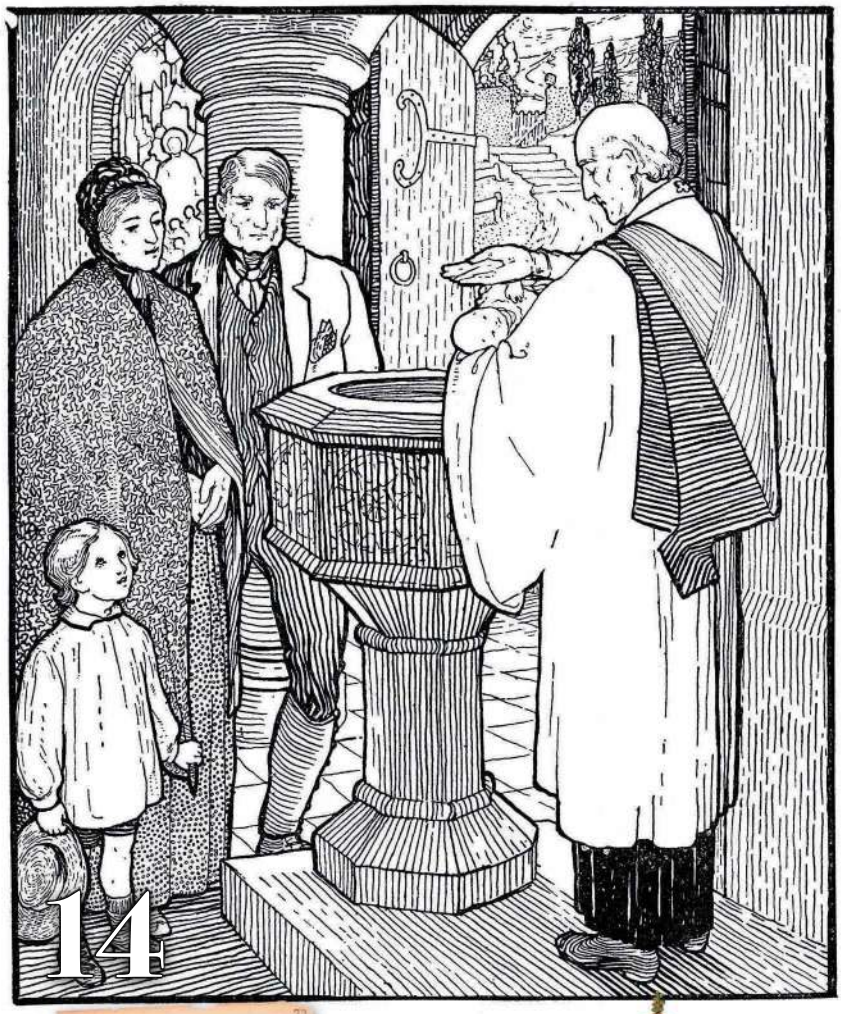

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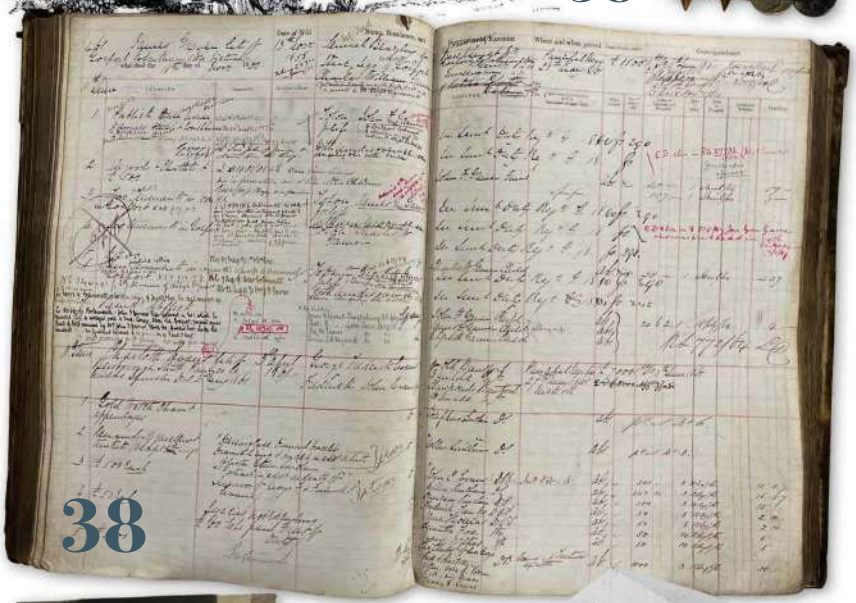

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Email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

Write to *WDYTYA? Magazine*, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST

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Winning Experience

STAR LETTER

I have been a subscriber for many years, researching my own family history for over 10, and have considered pursuing genealogy as a career. However, it is sometimes hard for younger genealogists to know how to start off. Therefore, I was excited when I saw the news story in your March issue about an opportunity for a young genealogist to get some work experience. After creating a presentation on the topic breaking down brick walls concerning my illegitimate 4x great grandfather, I was the lucky winner.

Sophie loved her work experience at Family Wise's office in Calne

I spent three days at the Family Wise headquarters in Calne at the end of April. I learnt about the family history research and people-tracing services they offer. They are currently launching a free service to trace family and friends for those in care homes, to facilitate reunions: an amazing idea.

I also learnt new strategies for interpreting DNA results and identifying matches. I practised search techniques for finding people with common surnames such as Jones in large cities. I also had a go at tracing beneficiaries of unclaimed estates from the Government's Bona Vacantia list. I learnt a lot more about how the process of probate works, including how an estate would be divided between beneficiaries.

Some other highlights included:

- identifying individuals who were mentioned in letters from the 1960s–1980s using names and addresses;
- getting to see a family Bible from the 1800s which was being sent to a beneficiary;
- going out with a meal with the Family Wise team and getting to know them all better;
- taking a short trip myself to neighbouring Compton Bassett where I found gravestones of my 6x great grandaunts!

I had an amazing experience at Family Wise in a fast-paced environment; it was great to spend time with people with a similar passion, and hear their intriguing stories. I have honed my skills, stressing the importance of thorough and accurate research. I also got to do international research, learning about new databases such as the National Archives of Australia's Passenger Lists (**tinyurl.com/naa-pass-list**).

I had an amazing experience at Family Wise in a fast-paced environment

I would definitely recommend the experience to anyone else when it runs in the future.

I have also written a longer blog detailing my experience on Family Wise's site, for those who are interested: **family-wise.co.uk/2024/04/26/family-wise-young-genealogist-experience**.

Sophie Broad, Berkshire

Editor Replies **Thank you for sharing your experience Sophie. It sounds like you had a fantastic time with the Family Wise team. You have now also won our Star Letter prize. It's a win–win situation!**

Tip For Tracing Someone With A Common Name

Nick Peers' article in the May issue comparing the main genealogical websites reminded me how good the newspaper collection on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) is for tracing difficult-to-find ancestors.

Searching recently for one Mary, who was born with the unusual surname of Gard, I discovered that she had married a James Davis. Tracing a Mary Davis was problematic. However, she came from a place called Montacute in Cornwall, so I searched on Findmypast's newspaper collection for Mary Davis and Montacute, and hey presto! discovered that she lived to be 100. A wonderful article with the headline "Somerset Centenarian's Death" was published in the *Somerset County Herald* on Saturday 12 December 1946, and mentioned her 11 children and 15 grandchildren. So thank you for the reminder not to forget newspaper collections. It's amazing how much detail they can contain.

Debbie Lloyd, by email

Editor Replies **Thank you for sharing that tip Debbie. We need all the help we can get to trace ancestors with common names.**

Women Of War

I was very interested in the photo of munitionettes at the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich during the First World War ('Local Industry', May). I don't recognise any of the women, but I have a similar photograph *(opposite)* showing similar women during the war including my maternal grandmother Amelia Day (who was born 10 November 1884 in Shoreditch, North London) plus her elder sister Annie.

Since the Day family lived in Shoreditch, it was just assumed that they worked south-east of the river in Woolwich despite having no family connections with that area, so perhaps those associated with your magazine might know if there were any other armament factories north of the River Thames. Also, as my photo shows ladies with what appear to be badges on their overalls (I couldn't see any badges in the picture in your magazine), perhaps someone might know not only what the badges refer to but why Grandmother's badge appears to be different to her sister's and the other ladies there.

I'm always pleased to receive your magazine, especially with a topic that raises the awareness of the dangerous occupation that ordinary women undertook during the First World War.

Janis King, by email

In Janis' photo Amelia is sitting second from left in the front row, and her sister Annie is second from left behind her

Editor Replies Can any readers help Janis identify where her family worked, or what the badges on their overalls might mean?

Dodgy Dodshon

On the 'Welcome' page of your May issue you asked for tales about dodgy ancestors. Researching my paternal ancestors I came across one Dodshon Wood, a 3x great uncle. Dodshon junior was born in 1831, the eldest of the 10 children of Mary and Dodshon Wood senior of Aycliffe, County Durham. Dodshon senior was a butcher on the High Street and Dodshon junior followed in his footsteps, working in his father's shop. His first brush with the law came in July 1857. At the assizes in Durham he was accused of "forcible entry and detaining of land". He was "discharged on surety".

When his father died in 1870, Dodshon junior took over the running of the butcher's shop. We find him in the 1881 census as a guest of Her Majesty at Old Elvet Prison, Durham. He had been found guilty of stealing a sheep! He had been sentenced to "9 calendar months Penal Servitude", that is imprisonment with hard labour. I'm not encouraging or condoning criminality, but one has to wonder why, as a butcher, Dodshon could not have concealed or destroyed the incriminating evidence!

Brian Stockton, by email

Sue-Moon Warner commented on reader Gill Hulse's photos of her naval forebear (tinyurl.com/wdytya-gh)
My granduncle William Charles Warner was able seaman on HMS *Good Hope* – I don't have any pictures or scroll.

Editor Replies Perhaps it wasn't Dodshon's first sheep victim. The residents of Aycliffe may have been benefiting from cheap lamb for years!

Don't Blindly Accept Online Hints

Further to Chloe O'Shea's article in the May issue about the risks of copying information in online family trees, I have come across many online trees with incorrect information, and I always contact the tree holder pointing out their error (in the nicest possible way) and attach evidence as verification, although this is rarely acknowledged or taken up.

When researching a John Unsworth I fell into the same trap as several members of Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**), and when I realised the error of my ways I made contact with the tree holders. One lady was not convinced, and her tree still includes John's non-family. She's not alone because my late mother has appeared in my hints several times and, even though I've pointed the error out, the same trees pop up time and again.

Quantity over quality seems to be the criterion in a lot of trees.

John Muir, by email

Editor Replies: Many readers appreciated Chloe's article. The danger isn't just quantity over quality, it's also people wanting to do things quickly and easily.

Military Mix-Up

Chloe O'Shea's article in the May issue reminded me of the dangers of accepting the information in public member trees.

When researching my wife's ancestors, I struck a brick wall with John Jordan Derry senior, born 29 May 1854, because he disappears from the records after the 1901 census. His wife Lucy Rhoda Wilkinson Smith appears on the 1911 census as married and living with a nephew, and she was listed as married when she died in 1912. But I could not find John Jordan Derry senior.

Many online family trees put his date of death as 15 June 1918 in Flanders. I found it hard to believe that this man who disappeared from the records turns up as a dead infantryman in 1918 aged 64 having had no military experience. It only took a little more research to prove that the John Jordan Derry who died in Flanders was his son.

So, what happened to John Jordan Derry senior? The first clue was a John Jordan Derry (1861) on the emigration lists on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**). Using FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**) I found he left Liverpool on the *Mauretania* bound for New York, and arrived at Ellis Island in 1908. He lied about his age, stating that he was born in 1861. He married Annie Patterson Ingham bigamously in 1909 when he stated he was single. He was 55, but gave his age as 43.

Annie died in 1923 but in the 1930 US census John is living in Queens, New York City, with a new spouse, Elizabeth Derry, aged 45. He died in 1936, and his burial states that he was "born 1854, England".

This shows that public member trees should be treated with caution and perhaps a big pinch of salt!
Will Buckland, by email

Editor Replies It is very easy to accept Ancestry hints, especially with such a distinctive name. As you point out though, it is important to think about whether the hint is likely to be correct, and dig a bit deeper if possible.

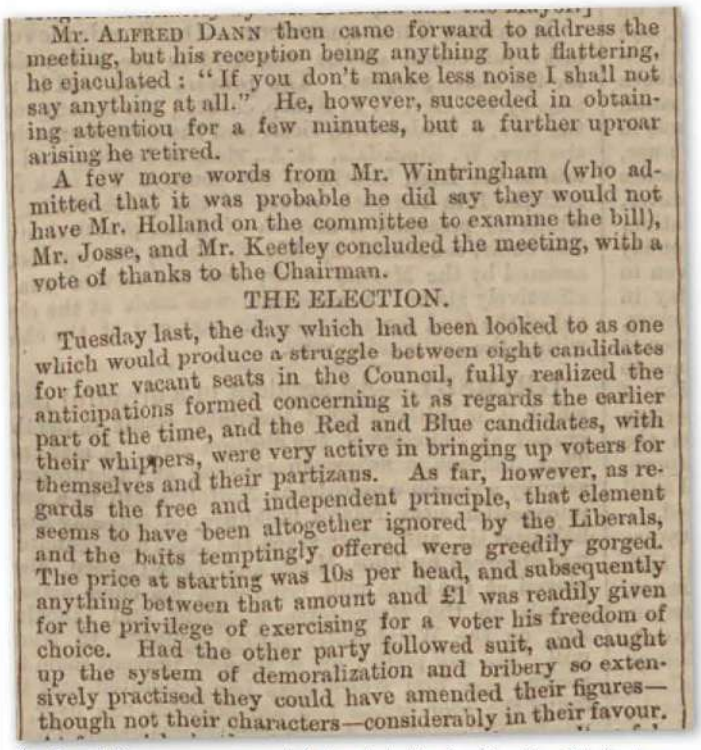
Electile Dysfunction

The sorts of shenanigans that Felicity Day describes in her interesting article in the May issue about general elections also occurred during local elections.

In October 1864 my wife's great grandfather Alfred Dann was one of eight people standing for seats on Grimsby Council. The following month the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* reported that "On Friday evening an overwhelming number of persons attended the Oddfellows' Hall to hear from the candidates for the Council an exposition of their views on the past, present, and future municipal affairs of Grimsby."

When Alfred tried to speak "… his reception being anything but flattering, he ejaculated: 'If you don't make less noise I shall not say anything at all.' He, however, succeeded in obtaining attention for a few minutes, but a further uproar arising he retired."

The same article reported on the election and its result with this observation: "As far, however, as regards the free and independent principle, that element seems to have been altogether ignored by the Liberals, and the baits temptingly offered were greedily gorged. The price at starting was 10s per head, and subsequently anything between that amount and £1 was readily given for the privilege of exercising for a voter his freedom of choice. Had the other party followed suit, and caught up the system of demoralisation and bribery so extensively practised they could have amended their figures – though not their characters – considerably in their favour."



Mr. Alfred Dann then came forward to address the meeting, but his reception being anything but flattering, he ejaculated: "If you don't make less noise I shall not say anything at all." He, however, succeeded in obtaining attention for a few minutes, but a further uproar arising he retired.

A few more words from Mr. Wintringham (who admitted that it was probable he did say they would not have Mr. Holland on the committee to examine the bill), Mr. Josse, and Mr. Keetley concluded the meeting, with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

THE ELECTION.

Tuesday last, the day which had been looked to as one which would produce a struggle between eight candidates for four vacant seats in the Council, fully realized the anticipations formed concerning it as regards the earlier part of the time, and the Red and Blue candidates, with their whippers, were very active in bringing up voters for themselves and their partizans. As far, however, as regards the free and independent principle, that element seems to have been altogether ignored by the Liberals, and the baits temptingly offered were greedily gorged. The price at starting was 10s per head, and subsequently anything between that amount and £1 was readily given for the privilege of exercising for a voter his freedom of choice. Had the other party followed suit, and caught up the system of demoralization and bribery so extensively practised they could have amended their figures—though not their characters—considerably in their favour.

Ron found this newspaper report of a local election involving his wife's forebear

The paper also reported that one confused voter had made a mistake and voted in favour of the 'wrong' party. The mistake would have been rectified, but some gentleman who knew the rules insisted that the voting paper should be accepted as it was. Before the agent and his man left they actually asked the individual for the return of the half-sovereign they had given him!

There were 1,292 voters on the register and apparently 1,028 of them "recorded their votes or had it done for them". Of these 629 voted for Alfred, so he was one of the four elected. Given that he had been shouted down the previous Friday, one can only imagine that he must have thrown cash around to buy votes.

By 1867 Alfred was also a lieutenant in the 6th Lincolnshire (Grimsby) Volunteer Rifle Corps. It was an expensive business being an officer in these volunteer units. For instance, in May 1868 he paid for the lunches of 80 people (62 corps members, plus the band and the press) at the Dolphin Hotel, Cleethorpes, which was owned by his father William, who was also an alderman of the town.

Alfred's expensive activities may be part of the reason why he and his father went bankrupt in 1869 and had to sell their farm, brewery and pubs so they could meet their debts.
Ron Gardner, by email

Editor Replies It's shocking to think that bribery was so openly committed, although it clearly didn't pay the expected dividends for the Dann family.

@joehutch shared a favourite *WDYTYA?* memory
I enjoyed John Hurt musing about his (supposed) Irish ancestry because "I always feel so at home there", only to discover that he had none.

YOUR LETTER IN PRINT We reserve the right to edit any letters sent to the magazine. Messages posted to our Facebook wall and tweets sent to us may also appear in print. The choice of Star Letter is the editor's and the prize is subject to change.

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Editorial
Editor Sarah Williams
Production editor Seth Burgess
Features editor Rosemary Collins
Art editor Robbie Bennie

Advertising Sales
Advertising manager Sophie Keenan
0117 300 8804
Brand sales executive Kelly Warden
0117 300 8538
Inserts Laurence Robertson
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What's On

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PICK OF THE MONTH

Help Hampshire Genealogical Society celebrate its Golden Jubilee in style

Golden Jubilee Event

6–7 July

a **Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney**

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-hants-golden**

Hampshire Genealogical Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a two-day event at Victoria Hall *(above)*. The first day has four talks including 'Fact From Fiction' by Dave Annal *(inset)*, 'Tulips, Topiary, Tradescanth and Thyme: 17th-Century Gardens' by Dr Janet Few and 'Ethical Dilemmas in Genealogy' by Dr Penny Walters. The second day has six workshops such as 'Mapping Alchemy for Genealogists' by Dr Sophie Kay, 'Digging Into the Parish Chest' by Jackie Depelle, 'Tips and Tricks for Palaeography' by Dr Caroline Adams and 'The Making of ITV's *DNA Journey*' by Paul McNeil. There will also be an exhibitors' hall, a bookstall and the chance to book one-on-one consultations with the experts. £35 for one day or £60 for both days. Advance booking required.

IN PERSON

Romany And Traveller Heritage Day

22 June

a **The Museum of English Rural Life, Reading**

t 0118 378 8660

w **merl.reading.ac.uk/event/romany-and-traveller-heritage-day/**

The MERL and the Romany and Traveller Family History Society (**rtfhs.org.uk**) are hosting a day of music, film, poetry, tours, talks, displays and family fun to celebrate Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month. You can bring a picnic and sit in the garden by a Romany *vardo* (wagon) and bender tent listening to traditional music, explore the Robert Dawson Romany Collection, and chat with expert family historians to find out whether you might have Romany ancestors yourself. Free.

The Family History Show York

22 June

a **York Racecourse**

w **thefamilyhistoryshow.com/york/**

The Family History Show comes to York in June, and will feature a day of talks from Nick Barratt, Keith Gregson, Jackie Depelle and Mark Bayley, plus one-to-one ask-the-experts sessions and an exhibitors' hall with a wide range of societies and companies. £8 in advance (two for £12), £12 on the day.

D-Day Lunch And Talk

27 June

a **Centre for Heritage and Family History, Reading Central Library**

t 0118 950 9553

w **berksfhs.org/events/d-day-lunch-talk**

Berkshire Family History Society will commemorate D-Day with a fish-and-chips lunch and a talk about the D-Day landings by local historian Mike Cooper. £11 for members of the society, £12 for non-members. Advance booking required. Booking closes 24 June.

Archives Online Training

3 July

a **Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick**

t 01926 738959

w **heritage.warwickshire.gov.uk/events/event/140/archives-online-training**

Find out how to use Warwickshire's Past Unlocked – Warwickshire County Record Office's online catalogue – with this workshop. Free, advance booking required.

Who Are The Travellers?

6 July

a **Dartford Science and Technology College**

t 01322 527604

w **tinyurl.com/nwkfhs-roma-ancestry**

In this talk Carol Mellors, who for 20 years was responsible for Traveller education in west Kent, will explain how to research Roma ancestry. Free to members of North West Kent Family History Society, non-members are asked to make a small donation.

Being Poor In East Sussex 1601–1834

10 July

a **Central United Reformed Church, Hove**

w **sfhg.uk/events/brighton-hove-meeting-centre**

This Sussex Family History Group talk from Elizabeth Hughes will explore the records of the Old Poor Law in East Sussex and the stories of people's lives they reveal. Free.

Tips And Wrinkles For One-Name Studies

13 July

a **Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, Winchester**

t 0800 011 2182

w **one-name.org/2024_littleton_ons/**

This seminar from the Guild of One-Name Studies will show you how to start a one-name study, and share tips for those who already have experience. £25, booking closes 30 June.

ONLINE

Introduction To Family History

19 June

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-nls-intro-fam-hist**

This workshop reveals how the National Library of Scotland can help your research. Free.

A Practical Approach To Finding Chancery Records At The National Archives

20 June

w **tinyurl.com/ihgs-chanc**

In this talk from the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies Sarah Pettyfer will use case studies to guide you through the process of identifying and locating records in Chancery Court cases. £10.

Family History: Using Military History Records

28 June

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-tna-but**

Will Butler, head of military records at The National Archives in Kew, shares his expert advice for tracing your ancestors' military service in this webinar. Free.

BOOK AHEAD

Don't miss this chance to explore Historic England's holdings

Historic England Archive Tour

24 July

a **The Engine House, Swindon**

t 01793 414600

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-hist-eng-arch**

Historic England is the public body responsible for preserving and championing the country's historic environment. You can discover its collections, including photographs, plans, drawings, reports, records and publications, with this guided tour. £10.

HAMPSHIRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

News

Rosemary Collins
reports on data releases
and genealogy news

MyHeritage adds 37 million New York family history records

More than 37 million birth, marriage and death records from New York City have gone online at family history website MyHeritage (myheritage.com).

The record sets consist of 7,560,069 birth records (1866–1909), 20,912,651 marriage records (1866–1949) and 8,893,688 death records (1866–1948).

They are searchable and include digitised images of the original documents.

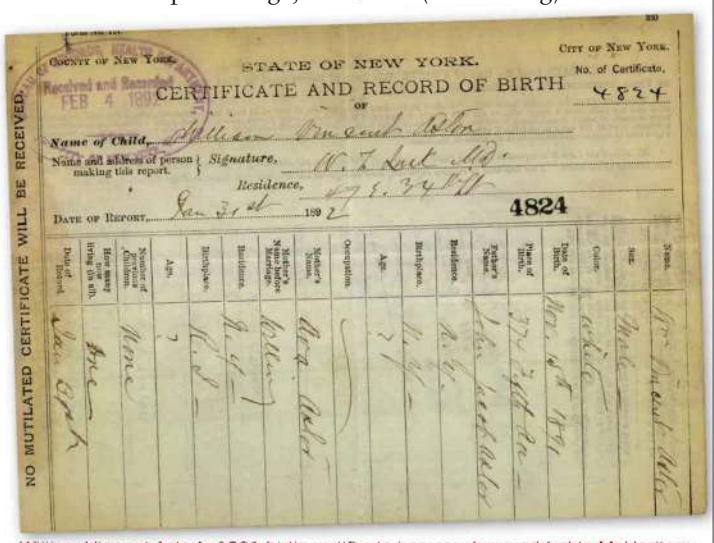
All of the records are extremely detailed. The birth certificates include the child's name, sex and race; date and place of birth; the father's name, age, occupation, place of birth and place of residence; the mother's name, age, maiden name and places of birth and residence; and how many previous children were born to the couple, and how many are still living.

Marriage certificates include each spouse's age; place of residence; race; marital status; occupation; birthplace; father's name; and mother's maiden name.

The death certificates include the deceased's age; race; marital status; occupation; birthplace; how long they were resident in New York; the birthplaces of their parents; the place; date and cause of their death; and the place and date of burial.

The records include many famous people who lived in New York City during the period covered. For example, the birth records include the birth of William Vincent Astor on 15 November 1891 at 374 5th Avenue.

Astor – later known as Vincent Astor – was a member of the prominent Astor family of businessmen and politicians. His parents, who are recorded on the birth certificate, were John Jacob Astor and his wife Ava (née Willing).



William Vincent Astor's 1891 birth certificate has now been added to MyHeritage

Broadway in Manhattan, New York City, photographed in the late 19th century

Vincent Astor inherited his family fortune at the age of 20 when his father died in the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912. He became known for spending his money on philanthropic causes.

The marriage records include the first marriage of Nathan Birnbaum, the real name of legendary US comedian George Burns. He married Hannah Siegel on 5 September 1917. The record says that Birnbaum was 21, with his profession given as "Performer", and Siegel was 18. The couple, who performed a dance routine together, married so that her parents would allow her to go on tour, and divorced at the end of the tour 26 weeks later. In 1926, Birnbaum married his second wife Gracie Allen, and the pair worked together as a famous comedy duo for decades.

The death records include the death certificate of Charles Anthon, a classical scholar and professor at Columbia College who was known for producing classical works for schools.

Anthon's death certificate shows that he died on 27 July 1867, aged 69 years and seven months, at 12 East 37th Street, with the cause of death given as "softening of the brain".

Anthon's profession is given as "Teacher" and he is described as a lifelong resident of New York City.

GETTY IMAGES

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ancestry's chief operating officer Howard Hochhauser signs the agreement with Dr Colleen Shogan, the archivist of the USA

Ancestry makes deal with US government's archive

Genealogical records company Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has signed an agreement with the National Archives and Records Administration, the archive of the US government, to digitise, index and publish its records over the next five years. In the first phase of the project Ancestry will digitise more than 65.5 million records, including Second World War morning reports, draft cards from the Korean War, naturalisation and immigration records, Asian American records, and Native American records.

Artist's impression of the new archive building that will open in Crewe

Cheshire Archives & Local Studies postpones closure

The closure of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies ahead of a move to two new archive buildings has been postponed by six weeks. The archive, which is in Chester, was due to shut on 27 June, but will now stay open until 8 August. It will then remain closed until the opening of two new facilities in Chester and Crewe in winter 2025/2026. Cheshire West and Chester Council said that the new archives' openings are still on schedule. For the latest updates, see **cheshirearchives.org.uk/about-us/about-us.aspx**.

From left: group chair Chris Evans MP, Baroness Young, Anne Barrett and group vice chair Lord Clark of Windermere

Archivist and historian win parliamentary awards

Historian Lola Young, Baroness of Hornsey, and archivist Anne Barrett were awarded annual Lifetime Achievement Awards by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archives and History (tinyurl.com/appg-on-arch) on 1 May in Westminster.

Young is an actor, author, campaigner and peer. She has served as professor of cultural studies at Middlesex University, and head of culture at the Greater London Authority. She was awarded an OBE for her services to black british history at the end of 2000.

Jenny Moran, a former member of the board of the Archives and Record Association and information management officer at Sheffield City Council, nominated Young for the honour. Moran explained, "Lola has been involved with archives and heritage work for many years in a variety of ways, but she has championed those causes rather than promoted her own voice.

"At a time of great division in our country and the wider world, Lola is someone who has brought people together and it is hard to keep 'plugging away' when the results are hard to see. I feel she is an unsung hero and I would like her continuous commitment to British and especially black British history to be recognised and celebrated."

Barrett is the college archivist and corporate records manager at Imperial College London, and a freeman of the City of London.

CAN YOU HELP?

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the conservation charity behind London Zoo and Whipsnade Zoo, is launching an appeal for memories and artefacts of the society and its zoos ahead of its 200th anniversary in 2026. As part of its History Hive initiative, ZSL is asking members of the public to submit "everything from vintage zoo toys and historic tickets to correspondence and maps", as well as photographs and videos. Those with memories of ZSL and its zoos are also invited to contribute to a new Oral History Archive, which will become available in 2026. The contributions will be used in a public exhibition in 2026, and participants will be invited to attend. You can find out more information about how to make a submission at **zsl.org/historyhive**.

This photograph of London Zoo keeper Alden and an African grey parrot was taken in 1935

JOY ASICO/AP IMAGES FOR ANCESTRY / CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL / SIMON O'CONNOR/ ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ASSOCIATION / BOND AND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

Artist's impression of NEWA's new building in Mold

Welsh archive building given £7.3m funding

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded a grant of £7.3 million to help fund the delivery of a new building for North East Wales Archives (NEWA; newa.wales).

NEWA, which provides archive services for Flintshire and Denbighshire, will move from its current locations in Ruthin and Hawarden to a new centre in Mold, although it will continue to maintain a small presence in Ruthin.

Denbighshire County Council is contributing £2 million to the project, and Flintshire County Council is contributing £3 million.

The new facility, next to the arts centre Theatr Clwyd, is described as a "purpose-built net carbon zero building" that will cost about £12.5 million altogether, and is due to open in autumn 2027.

Claire Homard, chief officer for education and youth in Flintshire, explained that the project will be called 'Creative Archives' and will "transform the way NEWA works, giving local communities greater access to collections".

TNA launches free online map of Second World War camps

The National Archives at Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**) has created an online map, Behind the Wire, showing the locations of Second World War prisoner of war and internment camps in the UK.

There were 510 POW camps and 28 internment camps altogether, which held more than 400,000 POWs and 30,000 civilian internees, mainly German, Austrian and Italian nationals in the UK.

The map provides the names of the camps together with the dates when they were in operation and links to relevant documents at TNA, such as camp correspondence, inspection reports and war diaries.

The website Behind the Wire

You can view the map online at **great-escapes-nationalarchives.hub.arcgis.com**, and visit the related exhibition Great Escapes: Remarkable Second World War Captives at TNA until 21 July.

Louis XIV

The king of France (1643–1715) is the 8th cousin 11 times removed of pop star Taylor Swift, according to new research (**tinyurl.com/wdytya-sun**)

225,395

The number of people in the Lloyd George Domesday Survey records from Surrey added to **thegenealogist.co.uk**

Signal book

A Navy signal book from the First World War has been found in a charity shop (**tinyurl.com/msn-ww1-sig**)

Tony Hancock

De Montfort University in Leicester has been given an archive dedicated to the comedian (**tinyurl.com/bbc-hanc**)

Dover Castle

A door carved with graffiti by British soldiers in the French Revolutionary Wars has been discovered at the Kent castle (**tinyurl.com/guard-graf**)

Certificates have gone up in price

GRO increases price of vital civil records

Family historians will now have to pay more for civil records of birth, marriage and death in England and Wales after the General Register Office (GRO; www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content) raised the price for ordering copies.

The increase is the first since 2019, and comes less than a year since the GRO made it possible to order digital copies of most historic birth and death records.

The price of digital images, which can be downloaded instantly, will rise from £2.50 to £3. These are available for births registered in 1837–1922 and deaths registered in 1837–1957.

PDFs, which first became available as part of a pilot scheme in 2017, will increase in price from £7 to £8. These are available for births registered in 1837–1934 and 1984–2021, and deaths registered in 1837–1957 and 1984–2021.

Traditional certified copies of births, marriages and deaths have also risen in price, from £11 to £12.50 for those ordered with an index reference supplied, and from £14 to £16 for those ordered without an index reference provided, requiring the GRO to search for the event.

The roll-out of the GRO's digital service has been broadly welcomed, but some users have complained about the image cropping which sometimes cuts off crucial information. There have also been calls to include marriage records, which have currently not been digitised and must be ordered in paper form.

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Banking On Prosperity

Alan Crosby looks at when our ancestors first opened bank accounts

Nowadays we hear a great deal about banks closing their branches. For generations, banks have been a familiar sight on our high streets, and an essential part of our personal financial affairs. In Britain banks emerged in the 18th century. They began as privately owned family businesses, whose existing wealth was invested for profit or lent out to bring in interest. Some of the names of these families are still with us – for example, the Barclays of Norwich were among the prominent financiers who became powerful and influential in the 1780s and 1790s. These Georgian banking houses only served the elite in British society; for the great majority of ordinary people a bank account was an impossible aspiration, and for many the idea simply never crossed their mind.

There was an important exception to this. By the early 19th century there was growing concern among social reformers about the 'domestic economy' of the working class, and their money management (or lack of it). The concept of 'self-help' was promoted in pamphlets and public meetings, proposing that careful husbanding of income by working people would allow them to save, and in turn those savings would be available for rainy days to come, seeing them through the difficult times. They might even allow them to progress socially and economically, climbing out of poverty and into respectability. It was a favourite theme of Victorian politicians and moralists.

Innovators argued that the working class needed access to banking

Money could be saved by putting it in a box under the bed. Proverbially, French peasants kept their savings under the mattress, or even in it. But this was a hazardous strategy. The coins or banknotes could easily be lost or stolen. My mother used to tell how in the mid-1930s in a poor part of Manchester she and her brother and sister would save pennies and threepences for their holiday (a weekend at Rhyl in north-east Wales), putting them in a tin that stood on the scullery windowsill. The inevitable happened – somebody smashed the scullery window and stole the tin. Even more risky was temptation; if the money was saved at home, it was always there. Feeling the urgent need for a pint at the alehouse? Wearing shoes that had to be mended? No bread to feed the family? There was the money easily within reach, ready for spending.

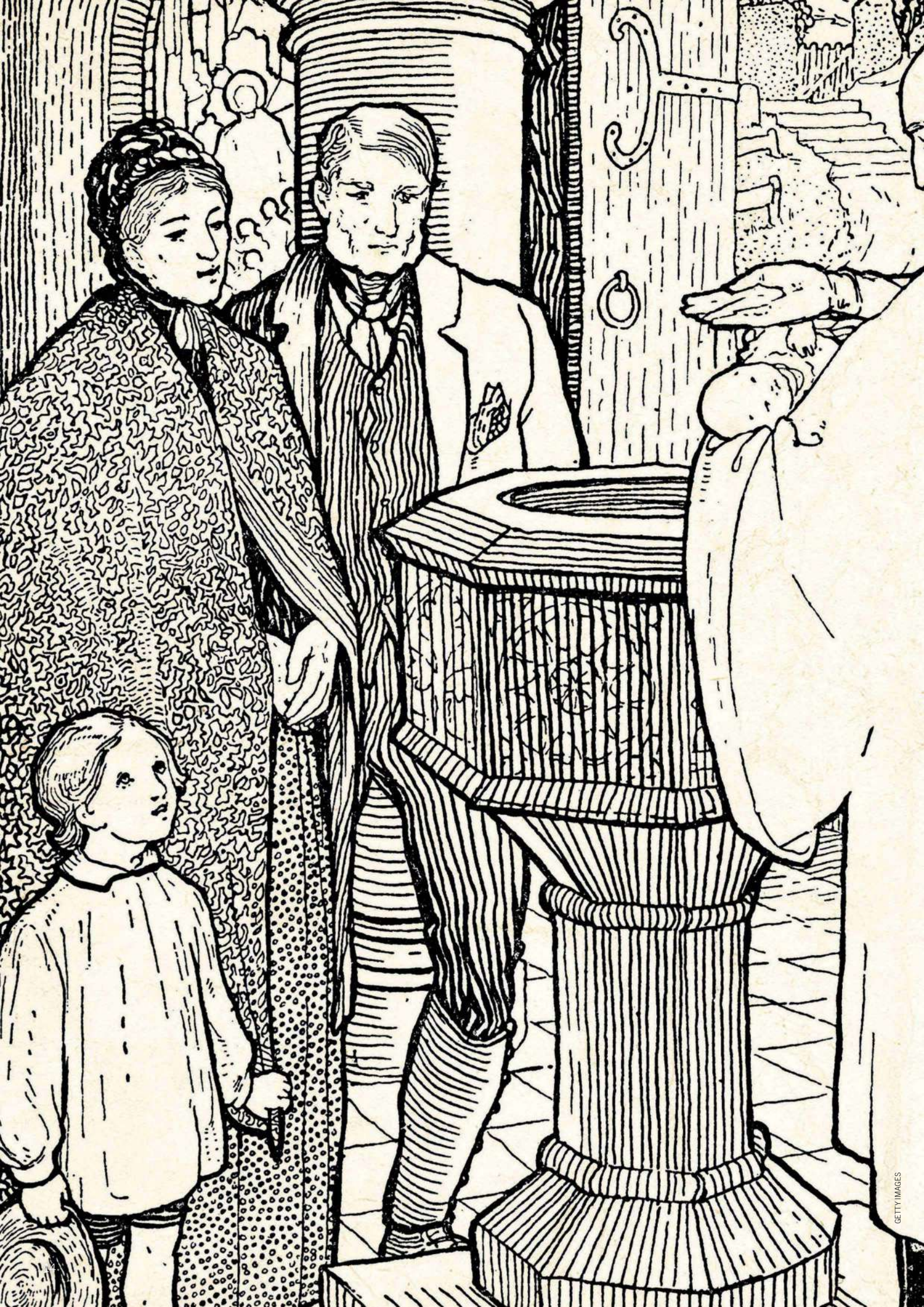
Independently, several innovators argued that the working class needed access to banking, to deposit savings securely, out of harm's way. Savers might even gain more if they could earn interest on the deposit. The key to the success of the idea, however, was to allow even tiny amounts – perhaps a few pennies – to be deposited. In that way ordinary people could slowly build up a precious nest egg, far smaller than the sums that the big business banks handled, but vitally important to the saver.

There were various pioneering experiments in this sort of banking during the 1790s, but in 1810 the world's first proper 'penny savings bank' was founded by Rev Henry Duncan… not in some great city or fast-growing industrial centre, but in the small and remote village of Ruthwell, near Dumfries in southern Scotland. From this modest beginning a great network of savings banks developed, giving thrifty and prudent working-class people an opportunity to organise their finances, accumulate a fund to serve as a safety net in difficult times, and maybe climb another rung up the social ladder.

Some years ago, I edited the autobiography of Benjamin Shaw, a working-class man who lived in my town, Preston. There, the penny savings bank was founded in 1816, by the Catholic priest Joseph Dunn. Shaw was a model saver. He believed strongly in financial caution, detested borrowing and trading on credit, and put any surplus money into the bank. When he died in 1841, he had saved over £150, equivalent to perhaps £20,000 today. None of his profligate and spendthrift family knew about the bank account, which was another benefit!

ALAN CROSBY lives in Lancashire and is the editor of *The Local Historian*

ILLUSTRATION WWW.SUEGENT.COM



GETTY IMAGES

A priest baptises a child in front of their family in a 19th-century woodcut

10 BAPTISM PROBLEMS AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

Chris Paton explains why you might not be able to find a baptism record, and possible solutions

Baptism records are some of the most important records to help with our family history research, particularly before the advent of the civil registration of births, although they can also be of assistance after this.

In England and Wales, baptismal registers have been kept by churches since 1538, while the earliest surviving parish baptism entry in Scotland dates back to 1553. In some cases the records may note a date of birth, but more often than not the date given is that for the baptism only, which was usually performed a few days later. Different denominations recorded their records in many different ways, but additional information provided may include the names of the child's parents, residence, and the names of any sponsors or godparents.

For a variety of reasons, however, baptismal records are not necessarily always straightforward to find. Here are the 10 most common problems, and how you might overcome them.

1 The Baptismal Registers Have Not Survived

One obvious reason why baptismal registers cannot be found is that they have not survived, for example if destroyed through events such as fires, floods or war. For instance, in 1922 almost all Church of Ireland registers were lost in a fire at the Public Record Office in Dublin during the Irish Civil War, although copies for some have survived (see the Church's website: **ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library/list-of-parish-registers**).

In England and Wales there is an alternative source to consult if baptismal registers have not survived in the form of Bishops' Transcripts (BTs), which Church of England ministers were obliged to keep from 1598 onwards. Details of surviving registers and BTs are noted in Cecil R Humphery-Smith's book *The Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers*, available in the collection 'Great Britain, Atlas and Index of Parish Registers' on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/8830**).

As well as records that did not survive through misfortune, some documents may also have been deliberately destroyed. For example, in a small number of Scottish parishes registers were seized by congregations after the passing of the Napoleonic Militia Acts in 1797 and 1802, to prevent them being used to provide evidence of age in a military conscription. Details of surviving Scottish registers can be found on the website of National Records of Scotland (NRS): **nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/old-parish-registers/list-of-old-parish-registers**.

2 The Records Are Not Available Online

Websites such as Ancestry, FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**), Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) and TheGenealogist (**thegenealogist.co.uk**) can be wonderful for our research, but they do not contain digital copies of every parish record. The sites' catalogues will identify what they offer, but *The Phillimore Atlas* can help to identify other collections yet to ▶

▶ be digitised, usually held at a local county record office.

Many online collections will also have cut-off periods for more recent events for a variety of reasons, including privacy concerns. For example, Hampshire Church of England baptism records are available on Ancestry for 1538–1921 only, while on the government website ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**), the majority of Church of Scotland records are available up to 1854, with a handful for 1855, with civil registration records taking over from this point.

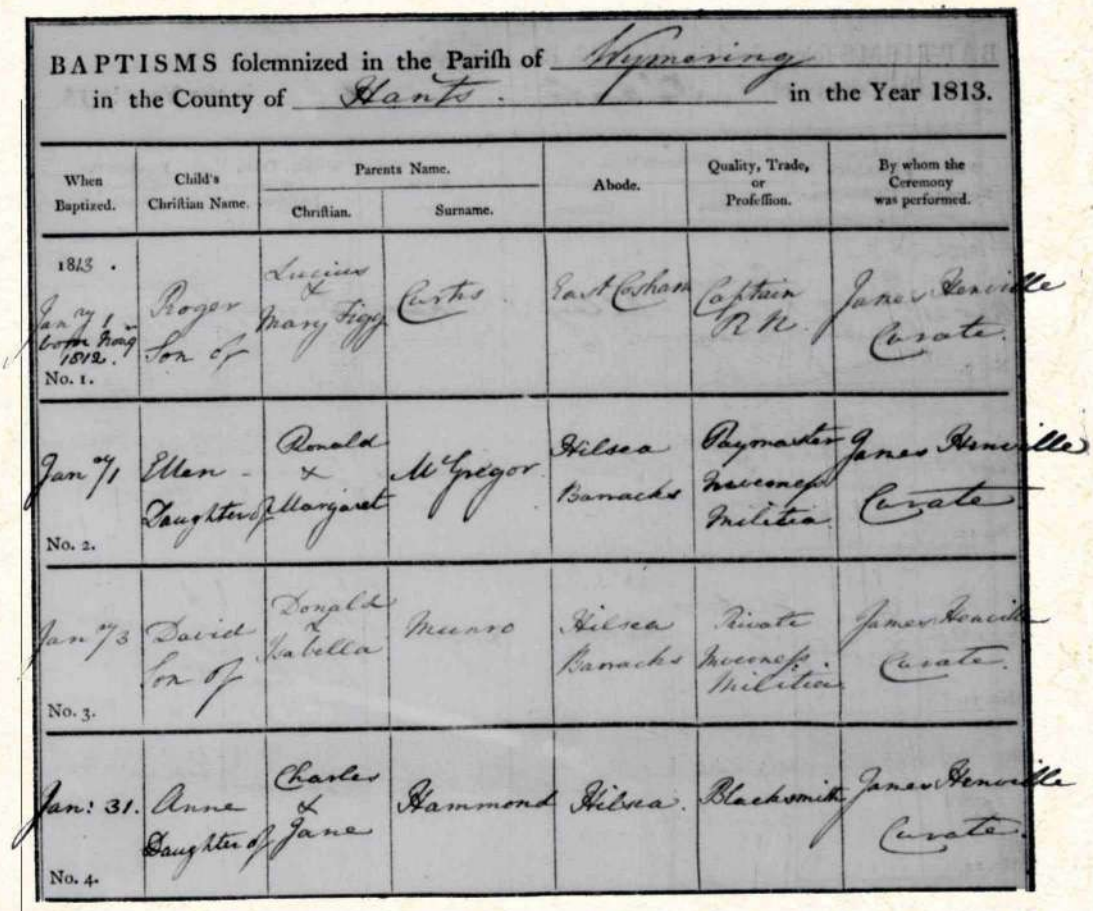
It is also worth checking more than one website platform for records. In Ireland, for example, Roman Catholic baptism registers are only available up to 1881 on the site Catholic Parish Registers at the National Library of Ireland (**registers.nli.ie**), simply because the records were digitised from microfilms for that period recorded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1950s. However, coverage for later years for 73 parishes can be found in Ancestry's collection 'Ireland, Select Catholic Birth and Baptism Registers, 1763–1917'. The Irish Family History Foundation's site RootsIreland (**rootsireland.ie**) also has transcriptions of later records for many parishes.

3 Records And Indexes Have Been Mis-recorded

Some records may be difficult to locate because they were mis-recorded in the original registers. An oft-quoted Scottish example from the Ayrshire parish of Ochiltree noted that "George Something lawful son to what-ye-call-him in Mains of Barskimming was baptized April 9th 1704".

In other cases, errors have been introduced through the subsequent presentation of records. Beginning in 1538 English and Welsh baptismal records were kept on sheets of paper, but from 1598 ministers were instructed to copy records into parchment books, with most original entries then destroyed. Through this exercise transcription errors were occasionally made, and entries sometimes abridged, with important details omitted from the original entries. Similar transcription errors were also introduced into BTs. Where possible, you should always try to view the original version of a record if it survives.

It is also possible that indexing errors may pop up when you're searching an online collection. Using wildcards may overcome such issues but it is often better to try to browse a collection online, if you can, rather than perform a keyword search. By browsing you may also find ancestors listed in additional roles such as godparents, information that is not usually indexed.



BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Wymering in the County of Hants. in the Year 1813.

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name. Christian.	Parents Name. Surname.	Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
1813. Jan 1 born Aug 1812. No. 1.	Roger Son of	Lucius & Mary Figg	Curtis	East Cosham	Captain R.N.	James Greville Curate.
Jan 7/1 No. 2.	Ellen Daughter of	Ronald & Margaret	M'Gregor	Hilsea Barracks	Paymaster Reserve Militia	James Greville Curate.
Jan 7/3 No. 3.	David Son of	Donald & Isabella	Munro	Hilsea Barracks	Private Reserve Militia	James Greville Curate.
Jan: 31. No. 4.	Anne Daughter of	Charles & Jane	Hammond	Hilsea.	Blacksmith	James Greville Curate.

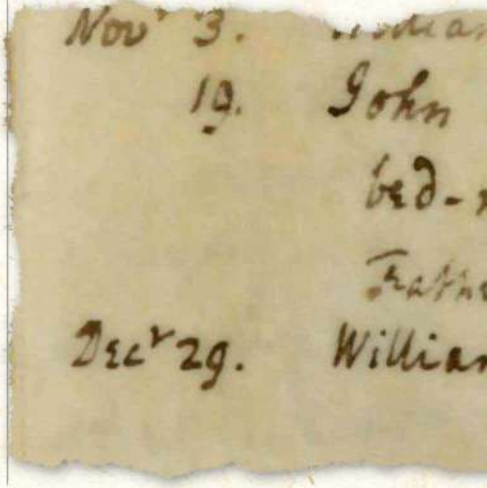
The baptism entry of David "Munro" in Wymering parish, Hampshire, from 1813. He has been mistakenly recorded under his mother's surname rather than his father's (MacGillivray)

4 The Baptisms Were Never Actually Registered

There were many instances where parishioners refused to register baptisms, or where it became hard to do so. During the 17th-century English Civil War many baptismal registrations are missing; none was recorded in 1653–1660 at all, with civil registration of births briefly in place instead. The period became known as the 'Commonwealth Gap', with many records not surviving.

From 1783 the Stamp Duties Act imposed a levy of 3d on the registration of British baptisms. Many parents simply avoided registering their children with the parish to save money; conversely, once the Act was rescinded in 1794, several children may have been baptised at once.

In Ireland, Roman Catholics were subject to penal laws prior to 1829, with many priests simply not keeping registers. Many nonconformist denominations in England and Wales also did



FINDMYPAST

not record baptisms. In 1843 the 'Great Disruption' saw one third of Church of Scotland ministers split away to form the Free Church of Scotland; in the immediate aftermath, many Free Church ministers did not keep registers until new churches were built. Knowing the history of a local area can often help to identify such issues.

Private baptisms, which could be performed by a minister or a layperson depending on the circumstances, may have a "P" or "Priv" noted beside them in Church of England registers. For example, on 8 March 1639 in Aylestone, Leicestershire, Henry Taylor was baptised at Enderby rather than at church "by reason of a grate flood hindering passage to our church". While many private baptisms were simply not recorded, the register may still note a later admission of the child into the congregation.

A minister christens babies in a London maternity hospital, 21 March 1932

5 The Family Were Nonconformists Or Dissenters

In England and Wales the Anglican church is the state church, as it was in Ireland prior to 1871, and in Scotland, the Presbyterian Kirk was the state church until 1929. These were the churches tasked with legally recording baptisms. Over time, many other 'nonconformist' or 'dissenting' denominations emerged from these bodies, and it may be that the reason you cannot find your forebear in a state church register is that they adhered to one of them. Methodism, for example, emerged from the Anglican Church c1740, with early Methodist baptisms still found within Church of England registers prior to the 19th century, but with dedicated registers emerging shortly after. Note that in England and Wales nonconformist registers were 'collected in' by the state in 1840 and 1857, and can be found digitised on the pay-per-view website BMD Registers (**bmdregisters.co.uk**), as well as the subscription sites Ancestry, Findmypast and TheGenealogist.

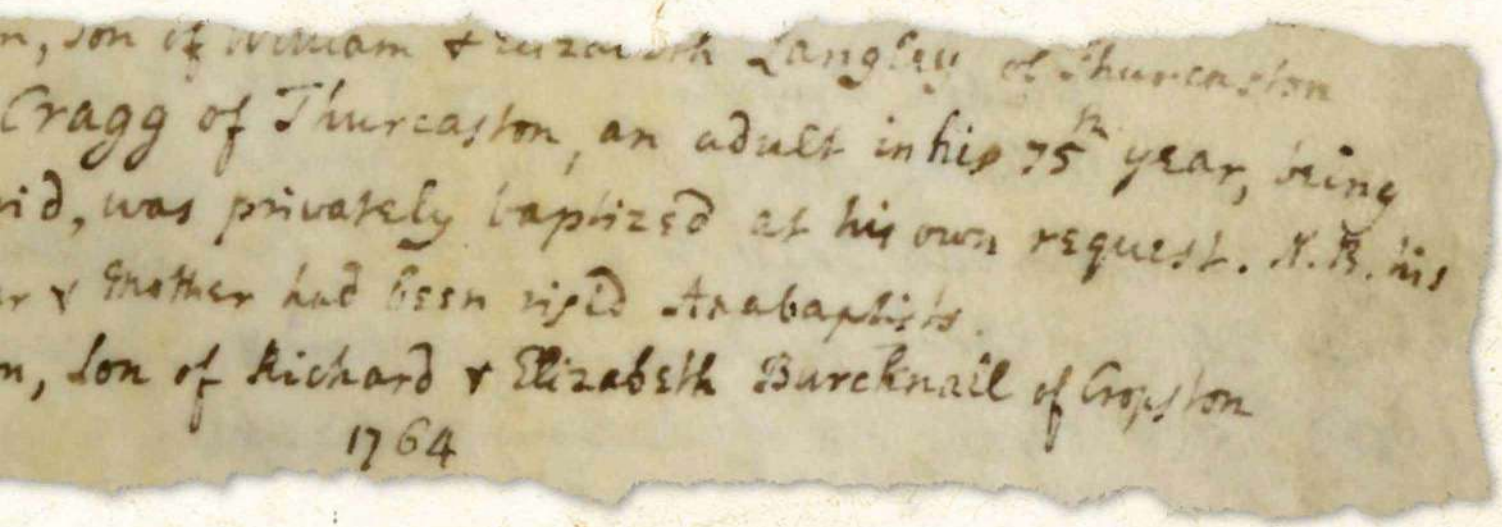
In Scotland, the Presbyterian Kirk was the state church until 1929

In Scotland the Presbyterian Kirk endured many schisms, with denominations emerging such as the Associated Presbytery, the Relief Church and the Free Church. Although each created their own records, only some are available on ScotlandsPeople. The state only collected in records if the breakaway body later rejoined the Kirk, meaning that some registers still exist with parishes that have chosen not to do so, while others may be found within the county archives.

6 The Biographical Details You're Using Are Wrong

When trying to find baptisms for individuals, we start by looking for an entry in a particular year based on information sourced from a document concerning them later in their lives, for example a census entry or a death record. However, information from such documents can be wrong if the informant provided incorrect details at the time of their registration. In some cases, an age in a census may have been deliberately stated incorrectly, or it may simply be that the informant did not know how old he or she actually was, and simply guessed. Sometimes we may even misunderstand what a record may be telling us – in the 1841 census, for example, the age of anyone over 15 years old was supposed to be rounded down to the nearest multiple of five.

In Scottish death records after 1855, the only UK death records to note the names of parents, the informant may not have known the names of the deceased's ▶



The private baptism of John Cragg, aged 75, in 1763 was recorded in the parish register from Thurcaston, Leicestershire

GETTY IMAGES / FINDMYPAST

parents, while it is also not uncommon to see an informant listing the wrong grandparents when registering a parent's death.

7 You're Looking In The Wrong Place

An ancestor may have been born and raised in a particular parish throughout his or her life, but that does not necessarily mean that he or she was actually baptised there. Children may have been baptised in the parish church of one of their parents, rather than the church within the parish where they were themselves raised.

It is also possible that if there was a vacancy in the church for a minister or priest then a clergyman from another parish may have stepped in, with the registration noted within that parish's registers. Illegitimate children in Anglican records may also have been recorded in a 'bastard register', rather than the standard baptismal register.

If the child's parents were members of a dissenting or nonconformist denomination, the relevant church may not have been located within the same parish where the family lived, with members of the congregation having to traverse great distances for each Sunday service.

Due to boundary changes over the years, records may also be held by an archive service for a nearby district or county, rather than the current council area responsible for the area's administration. This online guide from The National Archives can help you find county record offices and other national repositories across the UK holding baptismal records: **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/find-an-archive**.

Illegitimate children may have been recorded in a 'bastard register'

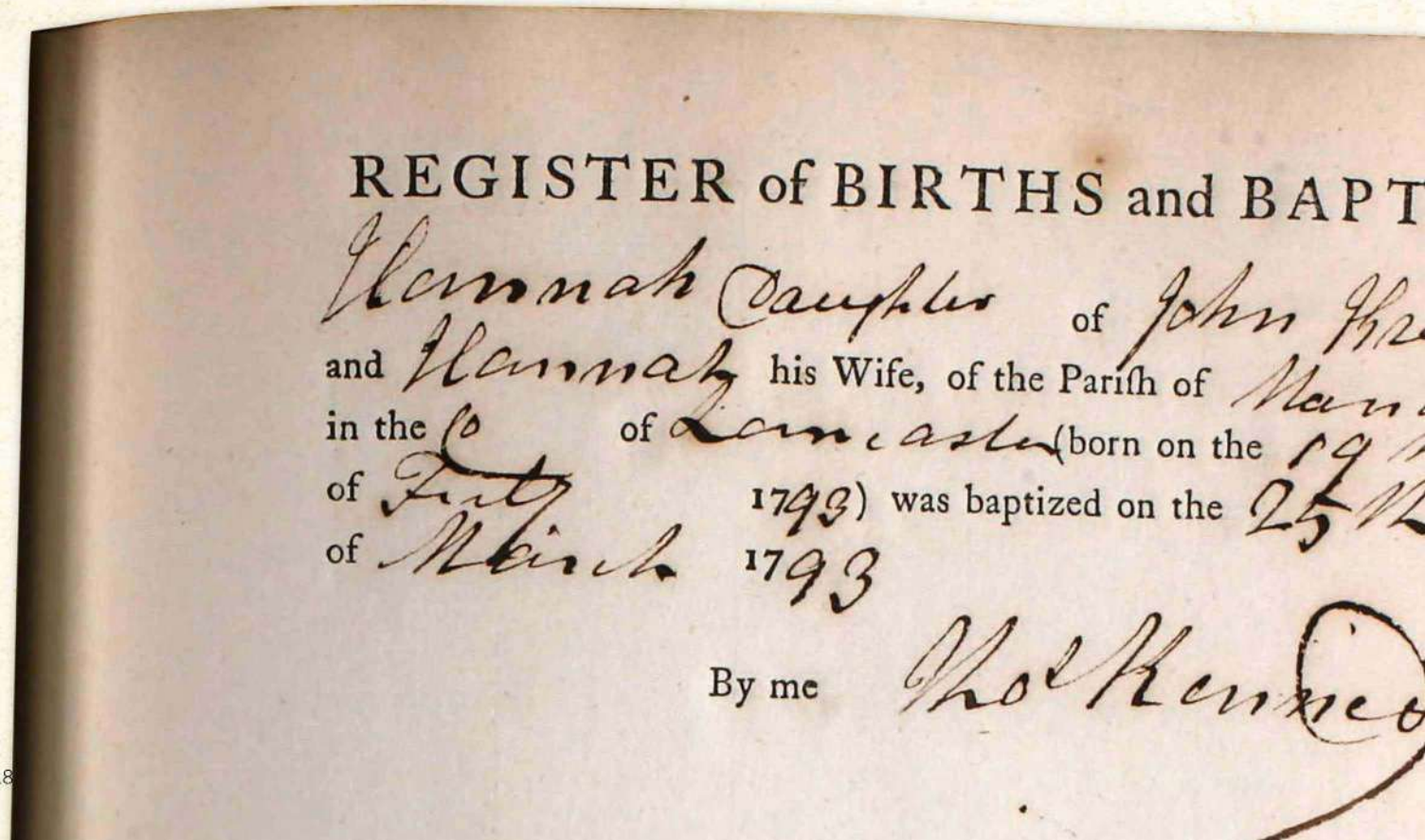
8 The Children Were Never Actually Baptised

It is entirely possible that a child's baptism may not be found because it was simply never baptised in the first place. In 19th-century cities, as the Industrial Revolution embedded itself, it became harder for many to attend church, while some parents were simply not religious and saw no need. As previously noted, factors such as war and stamp duty may also have dissuaded parents from registering their children with the parochial authorities.

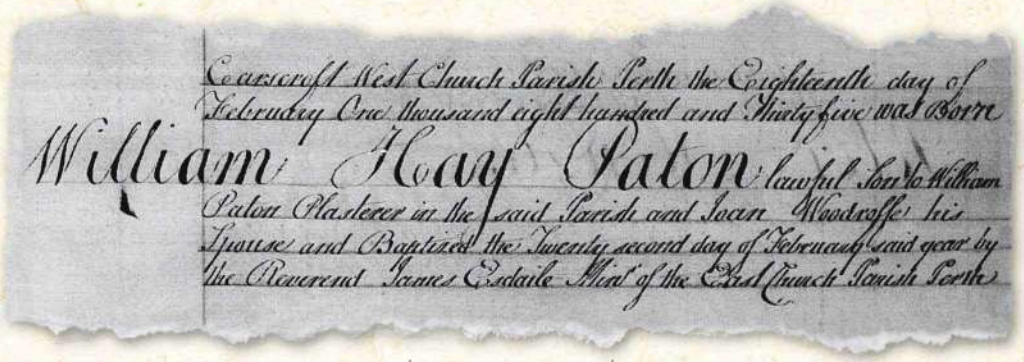
The mother of an illegitimate child may also have neglected to baptise her child for fear of the judgement of the Church on her moral character. In Scotland, infants may also not have been baptised if 'church privileges' had been removed from parents failing to put themselves before the judgement of the kirk session for a perceived misdemeanour, for example an irregular marriage: that is, marriage outside of the church without a celebrant, which was a valid form of Scottish marriage until 1940. It is always worth checking kirk-session registers for additional details, and in England, Wales and Ireland, the equivalent vestry records.

9 The Baptisms Occurred In Later Life

A child was usually baptised within a few days or even weeks of its birth, but this was not always the case. There are many


REGISTER of BIRTHS and BAPT
Hannah Daughter of John
and Hannah his Wife, of the Parish of
in the Co of Lancaster (born on the
of July 1793) was baptized on the 25
of March 1793
By me

ANCESTRY


Canongate West Church Parish Perth the Eighteenth day of February One thousand eight hundred and Thirty five was Born William Hay Paton lawful Son to William Paton Plasterer in the said Parish and Joan Woodroffe his Spouse and Baptized the Twenty second day of February said year by the Reverend James Esdaile Minr of the East Church Parish Perth

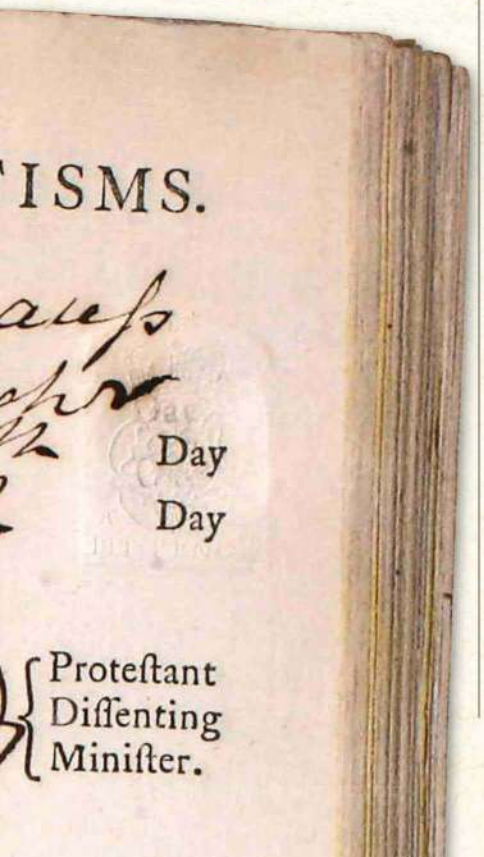
examples of adult baptisms recorded within registers, albeit not always distinguishable from the baptisms of infants.

Some dissenting denominations, such as the Baptists, were often baptised later in life; a typical example concerns a John Cragg of Thurcaston in Leicestershire, who on 19 November 1763 as "an adult in his 75th year, being bed-rid, was privately baptized at his own request". The entry further noted that his parents had been Anabaptists. (You can see this register entry on page 17.)

Events such as the Civil War and the Stamp Duties Act also led to many children being baptised some years after they were born, while the advent of English and Welsh civil registration in 1837 led to a flurry of adult baptismal entries before the new system kicked in. In Scotland, a Register of Neglected Entries, established in 1860, allowed for the late registration of baptisms from 1801–1854, just prior to civil registration in 1855; such records are included in the main Old Parish Registers (OPRs) baptisms database on ScotlandsPeople.

The detailed baptism entry of Chris' great great grandfather William Hay Paton in Perth in 1835. In Scotland, the 1812 Rose's Act did not apply, so the details in registers were not standardised between parishes

SCOTLANDSPEOPLE



The nonconformist baptism entry of Hannah Krauss at the Independent Chapel on Mosley Street, Manchester, in 1793 by Thomas Kennedy, noted as the "Protestant Dissenting Minister"

10 You Are Looking Under The Wrong Name

A forebear's given names may have changed during his or her lifetime. If illegitimate, a child could be recorded with the mother's surname, rather than the father's, and may then have taken on a stepfather's surname if she later married someone other than the father. Middle names may have been adopted at any stage to honour a deceased relative recently passed, and it has always been legal in Britain for a person to change his or her name, so long as there was no fraudulent intent.

Again, knowing the traditions of a particular area can often help. Prior to the 19th century in Wales, patronymic names were often recorded, and it may be that rather than having a fixed surname, the child may have been given his father's first name as a patronymic surname. During the Gaelic revival in Ireland in the late 19th century, names were sometimes changed back to an Irish form, for example Daniels to O'Donnell. Conversely, the names of immigrants may have been Anglicised in records to sound more British, or changed to ease their pronunciation.

CHRIS PATON
runs the Scotland's Greatest Story research service (**scotlandsgreateststory.co.uk**) and blogs at **scottishgenes.blogspot.com**

Resources

Take your research further

BOOKS

Ancestral Trails, 2nd Edn
Mark Herber
Sutton Publishing, 2004
Herber's hefty tome has yet to be bettered as the most useful general reference book for English and Welsh research, with in-depth coverage of church records, plus records gathered by the state and landowners. The book can be borrowed for free from the Internet Archive at **tinyurl.com/arch-herber**.

National Index of Parish Registers, Vol. One
DJ Steel
Society of Genealogists, 1968
The first of 12, this *National Index of Parish Registers* volume starts with a useful series of "General Articles" about parish registers, as well as ancillary and medieval resources.

Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors, 7th Edn
National Records of Scotland
Birlinn, 2020
NRS's valuable guide provides information about many of the records in its collection.

WEBSITES

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND
w **nidirect.gov.uk/publications/guide-church-records**
Here you will find details of all the baptismal records at PRONI in Belfast, with information about those that have been destroyed or are elsewhere. The page also lists digitised records accessible only at PRONI, and not online.

SCOTLANDSPEOPLE
w **scotlandspeople.gov.uk**
This National Records of Scotland platform hosts pre-1855 Church of Scotland baptism registers, and records from other denominations. A dedicated ScotlandsPeople research centre can also be visited at NRS in Edinburgh.

THE TRUE POWER OF HISTORY

Social historian Ruth Goodman tells **Sarah Williams** why her new podcast celebrates domestic life

Fifteen years ago *Victorian Farm* brought Ruth Goodman to the attention of most of us. The programme was one of BBC Two's biggest hits in 2009, and for good reason. Three presenters recreated the challenges of life on a Victorian farm based on contemporary records, and the nation was gripped.

We all silently thanked our washing machines as we watched Goodman tackling the laundry; a process of stain removal, mangling and ironing that stretched over an entire week. Goodman's enthusiasm was enthralling and she is now a regular on 'living history' programmes, explaining and demonstrating how our ancestors used to live.

We caught up with Goodman shortly after the launch of her new podcast, *The Curious History of Your Home*. The series digs deep into the history behind items in your house that you may never have thought about, ranging from wallpaper and carpets to vacuum cleaners, forks, fridges and baths.

The stories she tells are fascinating but a long way from the history we have been taught at school, where the emphasis is usually on wars, politics, exploration and 'great men', rather than everyday life. Goodman thinks that it's time for a change: "Take someone like Napoleon who was a big figure, the sort of person that we learn about in our history lessons. What do you think has had a bigger impact upon the world: Napoleon, or the British habit of drinking tea?

"In the long run, on a global scale, tea-drinking has completely changed the economies of dozens of countries across the world. It's changed trade routes. It's changed prosperity. It's changed attitudes."

Family historians look at how ordinary people were living

A Biased Record

Can Goodman explain why the traditional view of history still prevails? "I think we've been told that kings and queens and generals are important by their relatives because that's who used to write history, isn't it? It used to be written almost exclusively by men who were the minor relatives of, you know, 'my great grandfather, General So-and-So'. And what they were *really* telling us was that their families were important. 'We're big. We're powerful. We're special.' Well, history has moved on from that.

"As soon as we start looking at the rest of the world and the whole impact, we get a very different picture. Many of these people who seemed like big cheeses at the time, well, they come and they go and we forget them. And often their impact is ultimately pretty small. Whereas the ordinary stuff of you and I, it might seem small when you're up close to it, but, actually, we change the world over and over again. It's our habits and our behaviours and our ideas that move the world on into different spaces."

It was a frustration over a lack of historical information about an everyday activity that sparked Goodman's own personal journey of investigation into the past.

"Years ago, I was trying to find out about how people washed up in the past and it was like, does nobody know? Really, truthfully, does nobody know the history of washing-up? And it turned out, nobody did. Nobody had looked. So I found myself in libraries searching for clues.

"In some ways the fact that the research was so difficult was what made it so intriguing. It was like being a detective. It was all the best bits of being in a murder story, but without any murder. 'He says this, but then someone else says that, so one of them has got to be lying. And isn't there a bit missing there? And how do I find out this?' It's constantly digging and piecing together the bits of a puzzle, and that's quite exciting."

So, does all this knowledge about how people used to live affect the way that Goodman lives now? "It does and it doesn't. I know people managed without central heating, but I love central heating. It's just gorgeous. And I know loads of medical recipes from the past, but penicillin is fabulous.

"However, my research does make me sceptical of a lot of things that are pushed. For example, I don't use detergents in my washing machine. The Tudors didn't use detergents in their washing and they had nice,

Goodman demonstrates a vintage sewing machine from a British manufacturer

JAINE BRISCOE PRICE

clean laundry. I looked at my washing machine and went, well, that bashes my clothes in water like they did in the past. So I stopped using detergent, and nobody could spot any difference. So why do we use this stuff? Because it makes somebody money.

"The amount of chemicals you find in my house is pretty tiny. I use almost nothing. It's a win–win. It saves me money and it's better for the environment as well.

"The way I garden, the way I clean, the way I look after my family, is informed by the past, but that doesn't mean that I turn my back on modernity either."

The Benefits Of Studying Your Family Tree

Goodman also feels that family history is undervalued. "Family historians look at how ordinary people were living, and that's important. One of the things that comes out again and again in family history is that the official pattern of two young people getting married and having children, and people only having sex within marriage, is not what actually happened. Everybody who looks into their family finds that this wasn't the case. Split-up, made-up, reassembled families have been the norm throughout history. It's not a new thing.

"Family historians have a healthy perspective on life too. They are at the coalface of looking at how hard life was. They see the deaths, the poverty and the slums, and they see who pulls out of it. I do think that understanding the domestic, ordinary, social past can help you to take stock of current worries, and put them into perspective."

Goodman's podcast reminds us how much domestic items influenced our forebears' lives. Take the episode discussing lighting for example. When candles were expensive, evenings became shorter, social activities happened earlier in the day and there were fewer opportunities for privacy.

However, Goodman does not put lighting at the top of her list of 21st-century necessities. "If you really want to imagine what it was like to live in the past, turn your heating off in January. And then turn the stopcock off. The way we live has been utterly changed by these two things more than anything else."

So how would Goodman change the way history is taught in schools? "I'd like to see a very different curriculum. One that is a bit less heavy on the Nazis, with a bit more breadth and different voices. There's a strong movement to include female voices, working-class voices, ethnic-minority voices, disabled voices etc, but it's going to take a while to work its way through. And I'd like to see that reflected more in television and film, where it's still all Nazis and Tudor kings and queens.

"I'm hoping that my podcast will open people's eyes to the fascinating stories behind ordinary things, and inspire them to have a bit of a think about the world around them."

FIND OUT MORE

Ruth Goodman's podcast *The Curious History of Your Home* is available now from BBC Sounds at **tinyurl.com/bbc-sounds-curious-home** and other podcast services.

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‘I Discovered My Family’s Wartime Secrets’

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

David Hough knew that his father and grandfather had been put to the test in the world wars. His research has laid their ghosts to rest, says **Claire Vaughan**… although an uncanny incident suggests otherwise

At 7.30am on 1 July 1916, British forces who’d been engaged in a week-long artillery bombardment of German trenches near the River Somme in northern France were preparing to launch a huge surprise attack. According to the Imperial War Museums’ website (**iwm.org.uk/history/what-happened-on-the-first-day-of-the-battle-of-the-somme**): “Many of the infantry who went over the top were volunteers of 1914, including Pals battalions made up of friends, relatives and workmates serving side by side. This was their first experience of a major action in the largest attack the British Army had yet conducted.”

A premature mortar explosion alerted the Germans to the plan and they opened fire, mowing down the advancing British soldiers in a sustained and bloody machine-gun and rifle attack. On this first day of the Somme offensive there were 57,470 British casualties, of whom 19,240 lost their lives. Achieving very little, their advance has become one of the greatest symbols of the futility of war.

Events that day had far-reaching consequences for families, permeating generations with profound melancholy and hardship – including David Hough’s. Even as a child, David instinctively knew something wasn’t right. “I put some of that down to what my father Raymond, known as Ray, took away from the Second World War. He was still a teenager in that war, a volunteer fireman fighting bombs and fires in Plymouth.”

I needed to find out the things that my father was reluctant to share

David, who lives in Poole in Dorset, was keen to uncover his forebears’ wartime experiences. His story of hard work, archival luck – and possibly a supernatural experience – began 20 years ago with a family Bible.

Ray Hough *(centre with moustache)* joined the Auxiliary Fire Service in 1940 when he was 17

UNP/JAMES NEWELL

Biblical Inspiration

“I inherited the Bible from a cousin, and in it were some details of my Cornish family history on my mum’s side. I used it as a starting point for my wider family research. It gave me the idea that I really needed to go back and find out the things that my father was reluctant to share.”

Ray had suffered a nervous breakdown at the end of the Second World War, which affected him for much of his life. He spoke about the war only once, when he was in his 80s. “Driving back through Plymouth one day, we came to a junction and my father looked across at a nearby wall,” explains David. “He said, ‘In the war, I hid behind that wall while the bombs were dropping on the other side of the road.’ He clammed up after that.

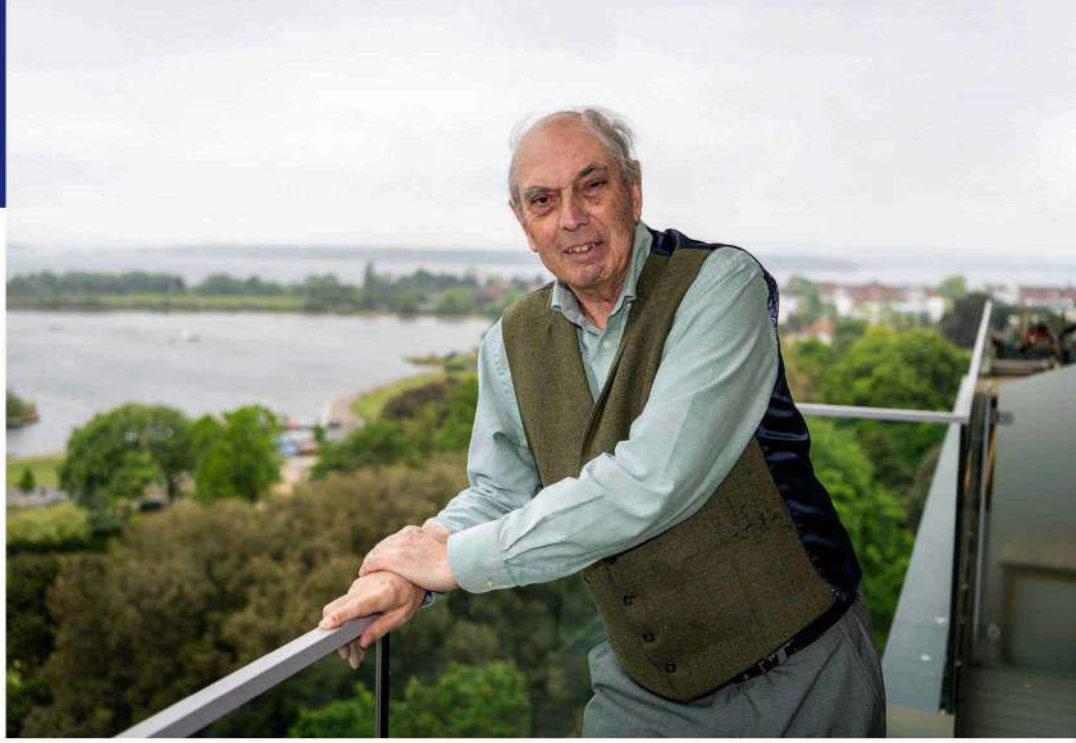
“I used to own a number of history books about the war in Plymouth. I still have a photocopy from one of them, *Blitz of Plymouth, 1940–44* (PDS, 1980) by Arthur Clamp, which gives an account of some of the city’s most intense bombing on 20 March 1941.”

Clamp wrote, “This was easily the most terrifying raid that Plymouth had experienced. The civil defence organisations worked feverishly, but it was impossible to cope with the weight of the attack. They fought desperately all through the night against fearful odds and dangers.”

The Luftwaffe returned to finish the job the following evening, and according to Clamp the estimated cost of both nights’ damage was at least £100 million, while 336 people were killed.

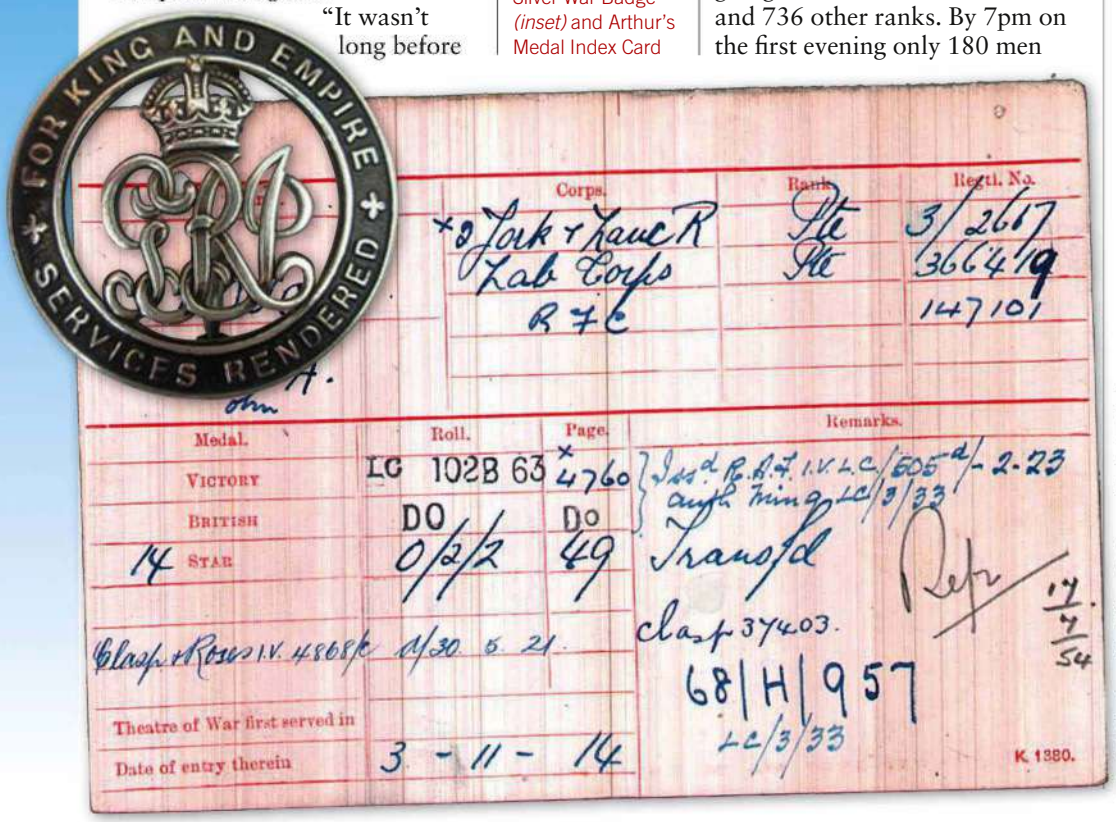
“It just shows you the kind of thing that my father had to deal with. It was an horrific experience, and left an emotional mark,” says David. ▶

Charles Herbert Hough 1869–1919
Clara Smalley 1869–1960
Four Siblings
John Arthur Hough 1894–1959
Fanny Johnson 1897–1972
Fanny Joyce Hough 1919–2000
Raymond Hough 1923–2009
Mary Short 1921–2009
David Hough born 1945
Janet Hough born 1948
David Hough's Family Tree



"There is enough information in Arthur's RAF files to be able to piece together much of his army service history," David says

A replica of the Silver War Badge *(inset)* and Arthur's Medal Index Card



However, his family's malaise began further back. His paternal grandfather John Arthur Hough – known by his middle name – lived through both world wars. Using birth, marriage and death records, plus military service records, medal rolls and War Diaries, David gradually managed to piece together what had happened to him.

Born in Doncaster in 1894, Arthur was one of five children of Charles Herbert and Clara Hough (née Smalley). Charles was regularly unwell and spent a lot of time in the infirmary at the Doncaster Union Workhouse. It seems that life was very difficult for the family.

Fighting In France

"Arthur was 20 when war broke out in 1914. Since he was then a private in the Special Reserve, which had been created in 1908, he was among the first soldiers to go to France, where he fought in the trenches. He had signed up for six years' service in the Special Reserve, and entered the theatre of war in November 1914 with the 2nd Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment. At that time, the regiment was fighting at Le Touquet in Belgium.

"It wasn't long before Arthur began to suffer ill health, like his father had. In July 1915, he was admitted to the 13th Stationary Hospital at Boulogne with 'disordered action of the heart' thought to be brought on by overexertion and fatigue."

But by 1 July 1916, he was back on the front line – and awaiting orders with the rest of his regiment on the Somme to advance across the mud and attack the German trenches.

David managed to track down the unit's War Diary at The National Archives in Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**). "The diary tells us that his unit's strength going into battle was 25 officers and 736 other ranks. By 7pm on the first evening only 180 men had rejoined the battalion. Arthur was among those wounded by gunshot. He was treated at No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station, then shipped back to England and taken to a hospital in Bristol." He recovered after treatment and was sent back to France but, unbelievably, worse was to come.

In April 1917, Arthur suffered serious shrapnel wounds to his chest while his battalion was attacking the German front line in the Loos Sector. "Years later, my grandmother told me that he was given up for dead until one of his mates saw him move. They carried him to a clearing station, from where he was shipped back to England for treatment at the Reading War Hospital in Surrey."

From The Army To The RFC

Happily, Arthur didn't see action on the front line again. "When sufficiently recovered, he was transferred to the Labour Corps then honourably discharged from the Army, being awarded a Silver War Badge. He was then sent back to Doncaster where he worked as an aircraft fitter with the Royal Flying Corps, shortly before it became the Royal Air Force in April 1918. This was also when he married my grandmother."

Arthur's move to the RFC was a stroke of luck for David. "Countless First World War army records were destroyed by the Luftwaffe's bombing in the Second World War, and there are few for Arthur left at TNA. Fortunately, there is enough information in his RAF files at TNA to be able to piece together much of his army

UNP/JAMES NEWELL

David's paternal grandparents Arthur and Fanny Hough – note Arthur's distinctive beret

service history. I have been able to read his RAF record in the Air Ministry series AIR 79, and his medal records. Other RAF documents told me about his wounds, campaigns and badges."

Once the war was over, Arthur returned home. "He came out of the war straight into a time of national depression. He had to go and look for work, but had difficulty because of his injuries. Before the war he'd been an electrician in a coal mine, but he couldn't do that now because his lungs were so damaged."

Arthur travelled the country in his search for employment. "He found work at Pooksgreen near Southampton, and later with Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) in Jersey on the Channel Islands. In 1936 he secured a job as an electrical fitter at Devonport Dockyard in Plymouth, but another war was looming."

The family moved to Devon where Ray grew up with his older sister Fanny, known by her middle name Joyce. "My father left school at 14 and followed my grandfather into the dockyard as an apprentice." By the time the Second World War began, Ray was an electrical fitter like Arthur. "He joined the Auxiliary Fire Service, and was caught up in the relentless bombing of Plymouth."

Arthur was now in his 40s. "Although now a civilian, he volunteered for war tasks that took him into Europe."

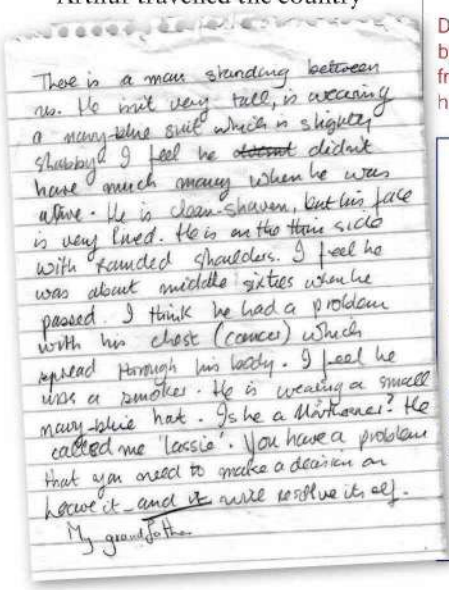
An oft-repeated family tale remembers how one night, when Arthur was home in Devon, the family's house was hit by an incendiary bomb. "Arthur and my father climbed up onto the roof to extinguish the fire. My father took the extinguisher hose while Arthur operated a foot pump in a bucket of water. 'There's no water coming through!' my father shouted at him. 'I'm pumping as hard as I can!' Arthur shouted back. Then he noticed that his foot was pumping the water in the bucket instead of the pump!"

David remembers Arthur as "a nice, quiet man", whose penchant for a blue beret made him stand out from other Yorkshiremen in their flat caps. "He died in 1959, less than a month after he retired and before collecting his first pension payment. After all his tribulations he deserved a long, quiet retirement."

A Strange Encounter

Something happened recently that David can't explain. "I'm a member of a creative-writing group. One day, while we were all listening to someone read from his work, the lady sitting next to me grabbed my notebook and started writing. 'There is a man standing between us,' she began. She described a figure only she could see. Blue hat, baggy trousers, sloping shoulders, clean-shaven face… everything fitted Arthur. She even mentioned problems he had suffered with his chest, although she thought it was down to cancer rather than the shrapnel. I'm not a person of a spiritualist nature, but it really hit me."

So where will David take his research next? "I think I've found everything that I was looking for. I'm going to put everything into books and albums, so I can pass it on to the family. It's nice to think that maybe Arthur's there looking down on me as I do it."



There is a man standing between us. He is not very tall, is wearing a navy-blue suit which is slightly shabby. I feel he ~~doesn't~~ didn't have much money when he was alive. He is clean-shaven, but his face is very lined. He is on the thin side with rounded shoulders. I feel he was about middle sixties when he passed. I think he had a problem with his chest (cancer) which spread through his body. I feel he was a smoker. He is wearing a small navy-blue hat. Is he a Yorkshireman? He called me 'lassie'. You have a problem that you need to make a decision on. Leave it – and it will resolve itself.
My grandfather.

David is mystified by this description from a member of his writing group

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

Resources

The National Archives' records were crucial to David's research

Medal records

w **tinyurl.com/anc-cat-search-medals**

The National Archives' (TNA's) Medal Index Cards and medal rolls helped David fill in the gaps in his grandfather's and father's accounts of their wars. Many are available digitally through Ancestry via the web page above, or TNA – see TNA's research guide at **tinyurl.com/tna-campaign-service-meds**.

RAF service records

w **tinyurl.com/fmp-raf-service-recs**

Findmypast's RAF collections include 'British Royal Air Force, Airmen's Service Records 1912–1939', digitising material held at TNA in series AIR 79.

War diaries

w **tinyurl.com/tna-war-diaries-1914-1922**

These priceless accounts of an army unit's day-to-day activities during the First World War won't mention an ancestor by name, but can tell you what they are likely to have been doing on a given day. They are held at TNA, and gradually being digitised; again, TNA's online research guide has more information.

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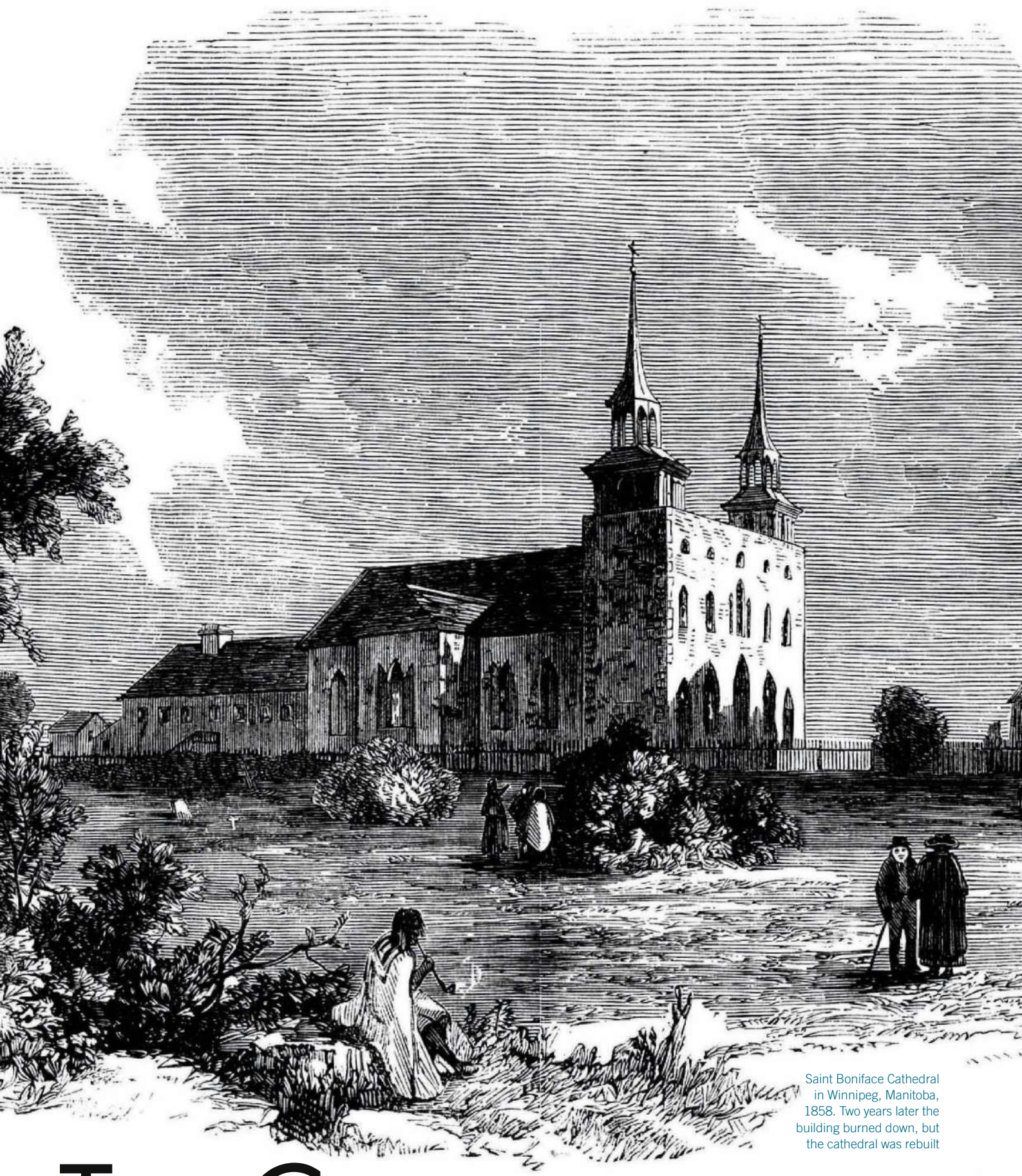


Saint Boniface Cathedral in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1858. Two years later the building burned down, but the cathedral was rebuilt

GETTY IMAGES

The Canadian Prairies

Albertan researcher **Gemma Noon** explains the history of the Canadian Prairies, and how to access the rich records that their European settlers left behind

This photo of Thomas Douglas' homestead in Pine Creek, Alberta, was taken c1913

Canada is a vast country, second only to Russia in terms of land mass, with a long and colourful history. First Nations peoples have lived on the land for millennia, while the first Europeans did not begin to establish permanent colonies here until the 16th century. Even then, it was another 200 years before European settlers tried to make their home in the Prairies – the vast, high plateau of semi-arid grassland that constitutes a third of the heart of the North American continent.

In the 1840s, the USA and the British government agreed on the division of the North American continent, establishing a border that, when it came to the Prairies, was a straight line along the 49th Parallel: the circle of latitude 49 degrees north of the equator. This decision, however, was made without considering the indigenous nations who were already living there. The border, a mere line on a map, would eventually become a political barrier, disrupting their way of life and leading to irreversible changes.

Despite the agreement, the relationship between the USA and the British government was never without tension. The concept of Manifest Destiny, a belief in the divine right of Americans to settle and govern the entire continent, was a powerful force in US politics, with both newspapers and politicians openly discussing annexing the British-held lands to the north. The end of the American Civil War in 1865 led to a surge of young Americans venturing into the West in search of prosperity, achieved perhaps through farming, or mining for gold or coal. The poorly marked and monitored border with Canada also allowed unscrupulous US adventurers to freely cross into foreign territory for hunting, trading, prospecting or even theft.

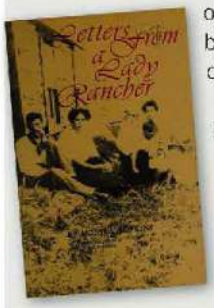
In response, the British parliament passed the 1867 British North America Act, which consolidated all of its

Monica Hopkins 1884–1974

The letters of one British settler shed invaluable light on the homesteader's experience

Amy 'Monica' Maggs was born in Dorset in 1883, the daughter of a Wesleyan minister. She grew up in middle-class comfort both in England and then in Quebec after her father took a post as a college principal there in 1896, although the family returned to England for visits.

During one voyage to Canada in 1900 she met and fell in love with a young adventurer, Francis 'Billy' Hopkins, who was off to seek his fortune on the Prairies. A long-distance courtship blossomed over the next several years, enduring even after the Maggs family returned to England in 1903 and against the conviction of her parents that life on the Prairies would be too hard for their daughter to endure.



Love won out, however, and by 1909 Maggs found herself travelling over a rough landscape in a horse-drawn cart towards her new husband's quarter section in Alberta. She had never so much as washed a dish in her life, but found herself living in an isolated log home where she was expected to wash, cook, clean and entertain. She threw herself into Prairie life with more enthusiasm than expertise, and chronicled her experiences in a series of letters to her friends living abroad.

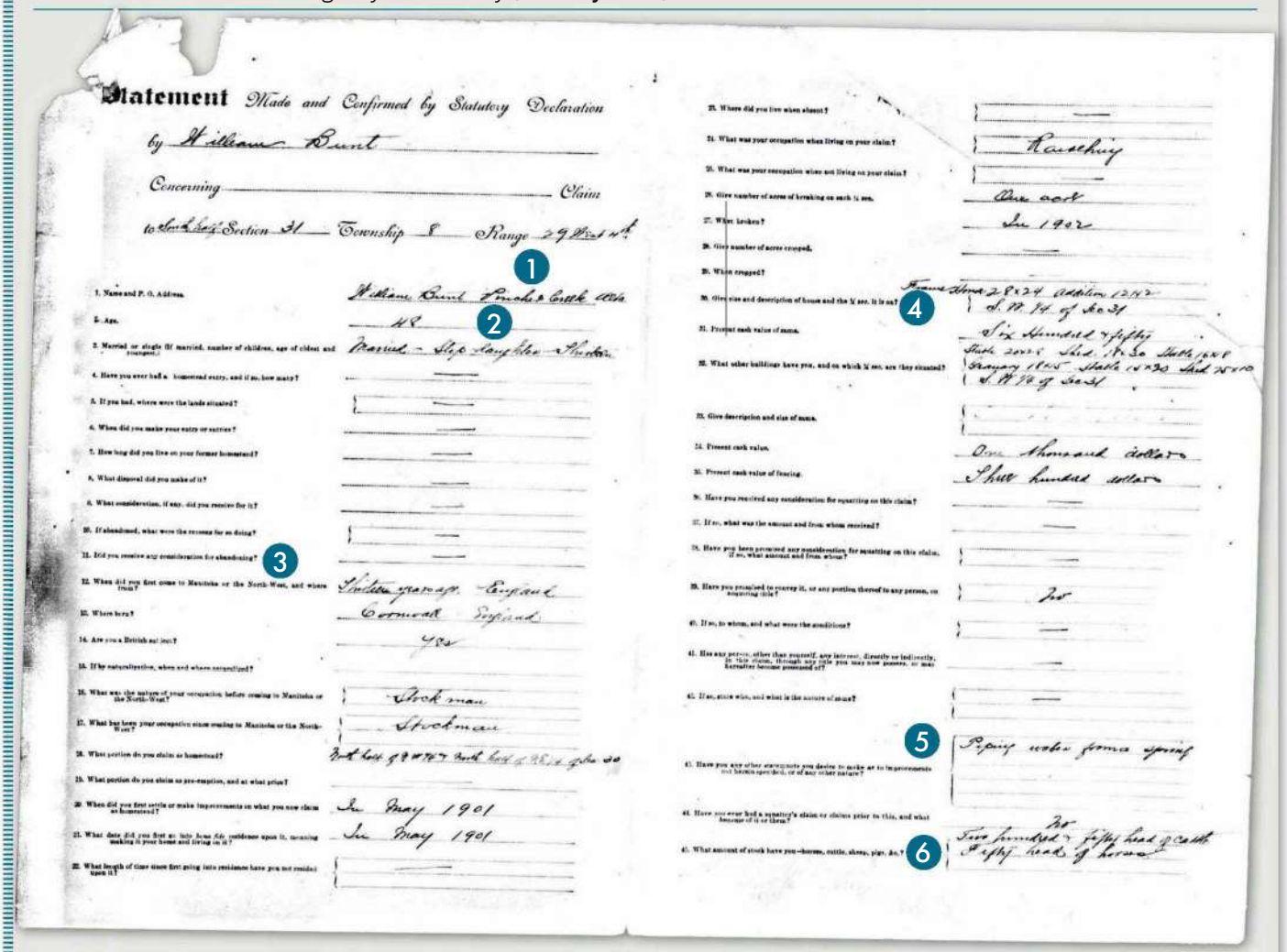
This correspondence later formed the basis of her must-read book *Letters From a Lady Rancher*, which was first published in 1981 by Glenbow Museum, Calgary, and provides rare female insight into the life of a British transplant to the Canadian Prairies. The first edition of the book can be borrowed for free via the Internet Archive (**archive.org**) at **tinyurl.com/arch-rancher**.

DID YOU KNOW?

If the sons of wealthy British aristocrats ever embarrassed their families, they could find themselves shipped off to the Canadian West and paid an allowance to stay there.

Homestead Record, 1903

This application by William Brunt from Cornwall, who settled in Pincher Creek, Alberta, is held by the University of Alberta in Edmonton and available digitally on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**)



1 PO Address

The official name of the nearest Post Office doesn't always match the name of the settlement. An office might be named after the postmaster, or a topographic feature.

2 Step-daughter

As well as the settler's marital status, the ages of the youngest and oldest child had to be supplied, including any stepchildren.

3 The North-West

This line refers to the Prairies, because Alberta and Saskatchewan were considered part of the Northwest Territories until 1905.

4 Description Of House

Building information can reveal a great deal. Some homesteaders lived in small sod huts, while other settlers in the Prairies had large timber properties.

5 Improvements

Building improvements recorded here can reveal valuable resources on the land, for example coal seams, lumber mills or sources of fresh water.

6 Stock

Stocking information indicates what type of farming the homesteader is concentrating on, and the type of land they hold.

North American colonies, provinces and territories into one nation: the Dominion of Canada. The plan was to send farmers and settlers into the Canadian West to establish new communities affirming Britain's ownership of the land and its resources. There was just one problem: with a population of about four million, Canada simply did not have enough people to move to the Prairies. The only option left to the British government was to encourage mass immigration.

In 1872, the Canadian government enacted the Dominion Lands Act, which allowed any man over 21 to acquire a plot of land measuring 160 acres known as a quarter section for only $10, on the condition that the land be settled and worked. It then embarked on a marketing campaign across Europe to attract potential immigrants, advertising the Prairies as "The Last Best West" where anyone could build a fulfilling, successful life. The strategy worked, and between 1890 and 1914 more than two million people set out for Canada.

However, of the hundreds of thousands of Britons who made the journey to the ▶

Prairies, few came from agricultural backgrounds. This meant that most knew little about farming. In addition many quarter sections just weren't viable for agriculture, so families were unable to grow enough produce to feed themselves. To make ends meet, men would work away from the homestead in mining, construction or logging. This left their wives to take care of the homesteads by themselves, where it could be weeks, if not months, before they saw another living soul.

Then there was the climate. Brief, scorching-hot summers were followed by relentless winters that saw deep snow and temperatures descend below –30°C, while bushfires, floods, tornadoes and dust storms were all-too-frequent hazards.

Considering all of these challenges, it's no wonder that tens of thousands of immigrants sold their land within a few years of arrival and relocated to cities or burgeoning 'resource towns' – settlements built around mining, fishing etc – where they could rely on the trades they had worked in back in Europe instead. Others left the Prairies altogether, to try again in another province or simply to return home.

This is not to imply that all immigrants failed to achieve their dreams on the Prairies. Indeed, thousands of families became more wealthy than they ever imagined, while others fell in love with the big skies and small, close-knit communities that sprang up.

Bushfires, floods, tornadoes and dust storms were frequent hazards

A settler's sod-built house on Sullivan Lake in Alberta

The Records

The British parliament's 1840 Act of Union created the Province of Canada by joining Ontario and Quebec together. Although individual colonies had taken their own censuses prior to this, the first 'national' one was taken the following year, and has been recorded every decade since. Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has created digital images of all of the national census holdings up to 1931 and made them free to search and access via its website, as well as the pre-confederation censuses that were taken in Quebec and Ontario: **https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Census/Index.**

Researchers looking for ancestors who may have lived on the central plains have the bonus of the Prairie Census. Three are available via the LAC census database – 1906, 1916 and 1926. While the precise information recorded varies between each census, the potential data includes

Expert Picks

Gemma recommends these three websites if your relations were Prairie homesteaders

Ancestry

w **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60865**

Containing more than 200,000 digitised Homestead Records from Alberta, Ancestry's collection will provide a unique window into homesteaders' lives on the Prairies.

Library And Archives Canada

w **tinyurl.com/library-arch-canada-census**

On this free government website you can search all census records from 1825–1931 held by the Canadian government, including regional and provincial ones, free of charge.

Peel's Prairie Provinces

w **library.ualberta.ca/peel**

Hosted by the University of Alberta, this collection contains historical newspapers, books, photographs and postcards about the Prairies, and is completely free to use.

The Stuart family's wooden home in Jumping Pound, Alberta

the location of the quarter section, annual income, parents' birthplaces, and year of immigration to Canada.

Homestead documents are another valuable source. Ancestry's collection 'Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872–1930' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9209**) provides basic details about the date of application and location of the homestead, but little else. In contrast, the subsequent Homestead Records are a gold mine. Those who had secured a quarter section had three years to build a dwelling on the plot, where they had to live for six months out of every 12, and to improve the land for farming; they could then apply to have the homestead transferred to their name officially. The whole process was designed to encourage permanent settlement rather than land speculation, but forced a lot of people to live in horrific conditions for years at a time.

As well as the location of their quarter section, homesteaders included their year and place of birth, their length of time working the homestead, their previous occupation, where they spend their time if not on their land, and the value of any improvements they have made. The records also include affidavits from friends or neighbours confirming that the applicant is being truthful, which gives you a glimpse at the relationships new immigrants had formed.

Ancestry has the digital collection 'Alberta, Canada, Homestead Records, 1870–1930' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60865**), while Saskatchewan's Homestead Records can be accessed via the website of the Provincial Archives in the province's capital Regina, where about 70,000 records have been digitised so far (**search.saskarchives.com**). Manitoba's records are only available on microfiche, and an in-person visit to the Archives of Manitoba in its capital Winnipeg is required (**gov.mb.ca/chc/archives**).

Local newspapers are invaluable for anyone who has Prairie forebears

Lastly, local newspapers are invaluable for anyone who has Prairie forebears. They can read like gossip columns where the comings and goings of residents are mapped in detail, and the results of the town's baking competition are recorded for posterity. Although many can be accessed and searched via the subscription website Newspapers.com (**newspapers.com**) or the free site Peel's Prairie Provinces (**library.ualberta.ca/peel**), it is very hit-and-miss which editions have survived. If the online repositories fail you, then it is best to contact the local-history society or museum in the closest community to wherever your relation lived. With luck they'll have copies of the particular local newspapers you require.

TOP TIP!

Don't forget to contact local-history groups. Most small towns have published at least one community history since 1967, and often have archives of original material.

RESOURCES

Take your research further

BOOKS

Clearing the Plains, 2nd Edn
James Daschuk
University of Regina Press, 2019
This harrowing but vital read explores how government policies led to starvation, disease and the destruction of the First Nations.

Tales From the Homestead
Sandra Rollings-Magnusson
Heritage House Publishing, 2022
This collection of 36 stories of early Prairie settlers was meticulously researched.

WEBSITES

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF IMMIGRATION AT PIER 21
w **pier21.ca**
The website of this national museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, contains a wealth of resources including articles and online exhibitions.

THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
w **thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en**
Run by the charitable organisation Historica Canada, this is a fantastic online resource for learning about the country's history, including the Prairies, and boasts 25,380 articles.

GEMMA NOON is a co-founder of Folklore Research, a historical research and heritage consultancy based in Cochrane, Alberta, Canada (**folkloreresearch.com**)

MERCHANDISE

BACK ISSUES
If you've missed an issue, here's a chance to complete your collection – and find out how to subscribe on page 22

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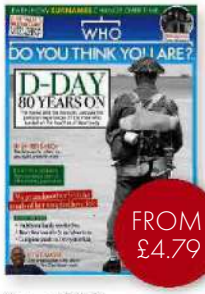

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- D-Day 80 years on
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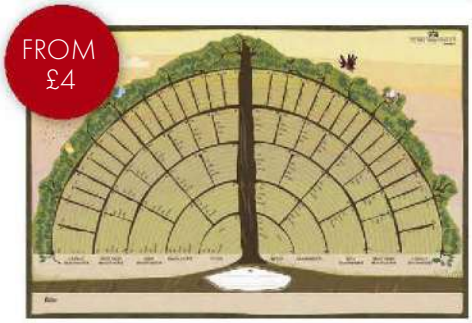

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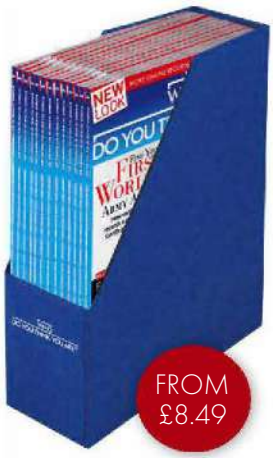

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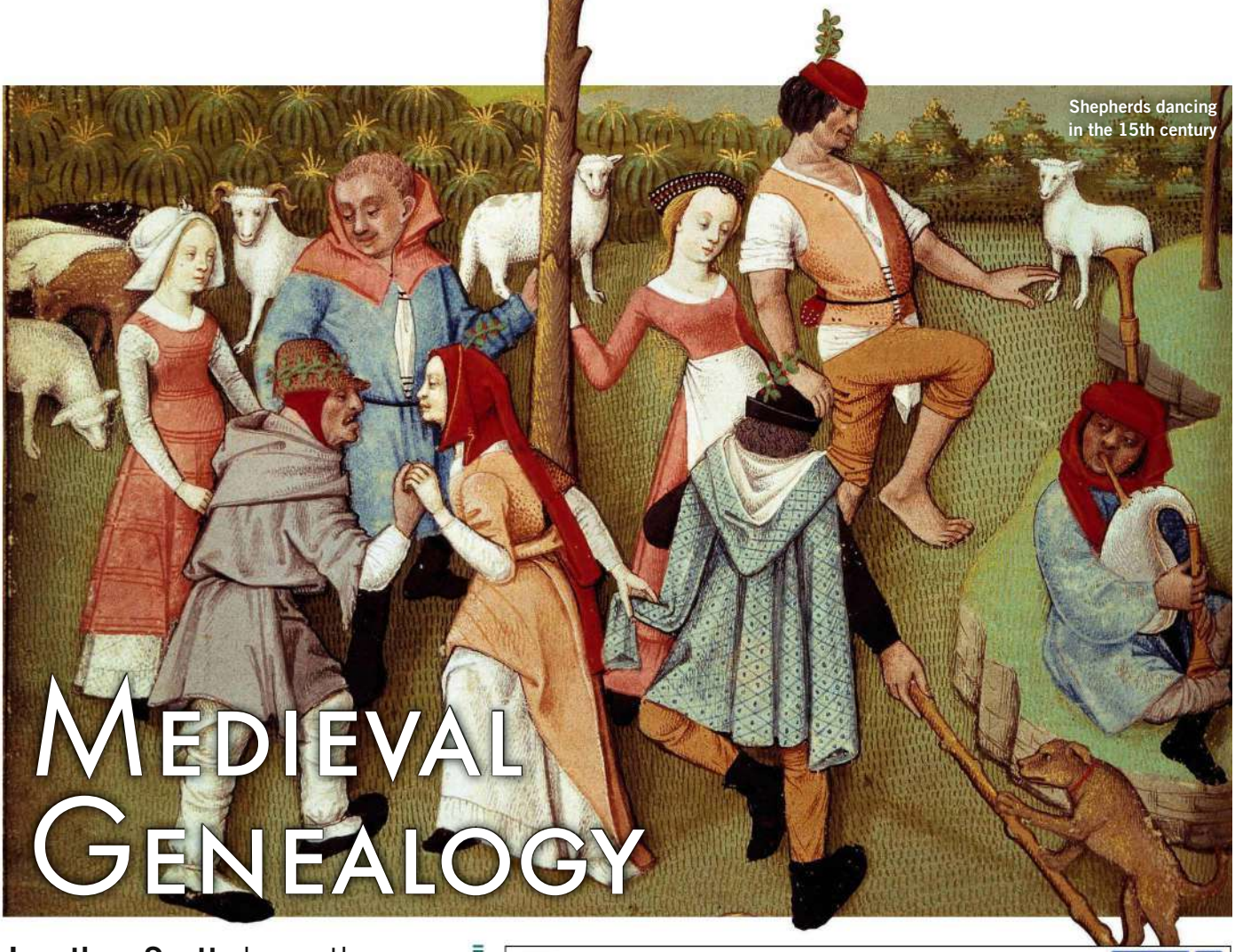


Shepherds dancing in the 15th century

Medieval Genealogy

Jonathan Scott shares the essential online resources for research in the Middle Ages

Although it can be something of a challenge to trace our own kin back to medieval times, there are copious online sources to enlighten research into the history of settlements, buildings, families and names.

The situation is summarised in the website recommended by this month's expert: "There seems to be a feeling that, for the bulk of the population, any knowledge of medieval ancestry is unattainable. In contrast, a hundred years ago, when genealogy was predominantly an upper-class pursuit – in terms of both the hunters and the hunted – medieval genealogy had pride of place."

This is the hunting ground of manorial records and heraldic visitations, of archaic legal terms and hard-to-read handwriting. And yet there are many websites that not only host digitised sources and volumes, but also include name-rich databases.

As you dig, you must read the background of each source. This is essential if you are to understand the context of a name – why it appears, how the record was used, why it survived, and how to find further information.

GETTY IMAGES

THE SOLDIER IN LATER MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

w **medievalsoldier.org**

Here you can search a free-to-view database of soldiers serving the English crown between 1369 and 1453. It includes those who fought in France during the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), Henry V's victory at Agincourt in 1415, as well as actions in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Spain. As the website explains, the reason we have so many names is that "soldiers received pay and this had to be audited". The range of soldiering is also broad, covering standing forces, garrisons and escorts. The site started life as a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), but has been refreshed and updated over the years, now including an expanding series of 'Soldier Profiles': **medievalsoldier.org/about/soldier-profiles**.

BEST WEBSITES

PEOPLE OF MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND

w **poms.ac.uk**

This is another vast resource that seeks to bring together all names mentioned in thousands of documents between 1093 and 1314 – essentially between the death of Malcolm III and Robert I's (Robert the Bruce's) parliament at Cambuskenneth – although it is currently being extended to 1371. As the bounds of the country changed over that time, the database covers any land that had become part of Scotland by the death of Alexander III in 1286. As a result the Isle of Man and Berwick-upon-Tweed are included, but not Orkney or Shetland. The site's 'Help' section includes a video tutorial: **poms.ac.uk/help/database/video-guides.**

MEDIEVAL LONDONERS

w **medievallondoners.ace.fordham.edu**

One of our partners for 2023's Transcription Tuesday event, the Medieval Londoners Project run by Fordham University, New York, is building up a database of residents of London based on a range of sources from wills to legal, guild, tax and property records. So far, the database has about 20,000 named entries. Although the records favour those prosperous enough to pay tax or leave wills, it is fascinating nonetheless. The site offers a collection of family trees under 'Other Resources' too. The university is also behind the Internet Medieval Sourcebook (**sourcebooks.fordham.edu/sbook.asp**) which brings together historical texts and primary sources from across the world.

EXPERT'S CHOICE

Anthony Adolph is the author of *Tracing Your Aristocratic Ancestors* (2013)

In 1399 Richard II surrenders his crown to his cousin Henry Bolingbroke, who rules as Henry IV until 1413

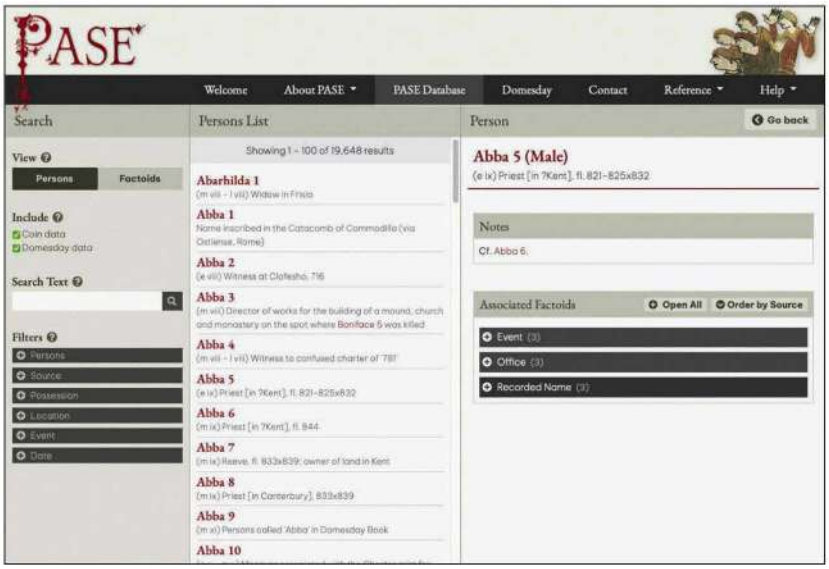
The website Some Notes on Medieval English Genealogy (**medievalgenealogy.org.uk**), which is run by Foundation for Medieval Genealogy member Chris Phillips (see page 37), has been guiding family historians through the medieval melee for many years. It remains an accessible and practical guide to a subject I've always found fascinating despite, or possibly because of, the fact that relatively few families are able to trace their male lines back that far.

Start by exploring the 'Guide' section. This has pages on handwriting, charters, wills and manorial documents. The manor was at the administrative heart of feudal society, and manorial documentation is more likely to contain references to ordinary people than most medieval records, which are often slanted towards landholders.

Within the 'Sources' section you'll find a medieval A-to-Z of English translations or transcriptions of medieval sources, arranged by author's surname, and by place name and subject matter. And under 'Resources' there are abstracts of feet of fines. These recorded the resolution of a dispute between parties, known as a final concord or 'fine'. Although they started out as a means of resolving disputes, they had by the middle of the 13th century become a popular way of conveying freehold property and can include family relationships such as names of spouses. It should be noted that in some sections there is a Northamptonshire bias, including tax assessments for the county from 1301, alongside a host of other sources.

The guide includes a section on 'Chronology and dating' with a calendar of regnal years, so you can work out what "5 Henry IV" means in modern terms (30 September 1403 – 29 September 1404). You will also find an explanation of converting from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar and back; dates of religious festivals; and an antidote to the medieval Exchequer's confusing system of starting the year at Michaelmas. You could say that this is a 'dating' website with a difference.

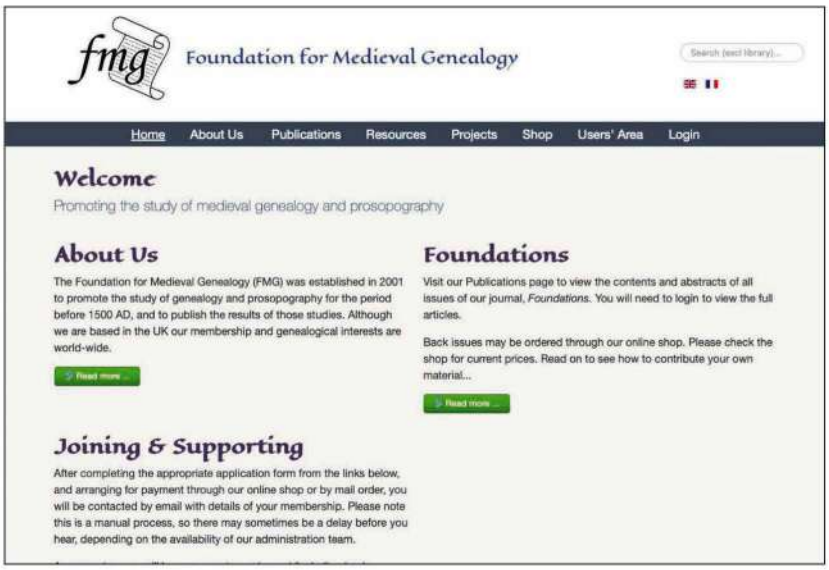
GETTY IMAGES



THE PROSOPOGRAPHY OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

w **pase.ac.uk**

The PASE database traces all recorded inhabitants of England from the late 6th to the late 11th century, based on sources that include chronicles, saints' lives, charters, the Domesday Book, inscriptions, coins and *libri vitae* – church and monastery registers containing details of people and pilgrims. You can choose to search PASE, or trawl the separate Domesday database. Searching by name will result in a distribution map of property and lordships that are associated with it. This is another website where a visit to the 'Help' section is strongly recommended, and will enable you to get to grips with the data much more quickly.



FOUNDATION FOR MEDIEVAL GENEALOGY

w **fmg.ac**

The FMG exists in part because of the work of the late Charles Evans, whose books and papers formed the backbone of its collection. On its website you can read about various projects and publications, including member Chris Phillips' work to compile abstracts of medieval feet of fines not yet published. This includes the abstracts themselves, links to digitised images of the documents, as well as listings of fines published elsewhere. There's also a collection of corrections and additions made to two works from Dr Katharine Keats-Rohan published by the Unit for Prosopographical Research: *Domesday People* (1999) and *Domesday Descendants* (2002).

Go Further

Nine more websites that you can't afford to miss

BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE

w **british-history.ac.uk**

This digital library includes medieval content.

CAUSE PAPERS

w **dhi.ac.uk/causepapers**

Visit for details of cases heard at the church courts of the Diocese of York (1300–1858).

ENGLAND'S IMMIGRANTS

w **englandsimmigrants.com**

Search a database of over 64,000 people who migrated to England between 1330 and 1550.

HENRY III FINE ROLLS PROJECT

w **finerollshenry3.org.uk/index.html**

This site features a searchable translation of records of money offered to Henry III for various concessions and favours (1216–1272).

INSTITUTE FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES

w **ahc.leeds.ac.uk/medieval**

The institute hosts the International Medieval Bibliography of texts relating to the period.

MEDIEVALISTS.NET

w **medievalists.net**

This "website for people interested in the Middle Ages" includes news articles and features.

OPEN DOMESDAY

w **opendomesday.org**

Here you can search all of the names mentioned in the Domesday Book, explore by county, or click 'Map' in the menu bar and narrow by categories of household, resources or people.

PIPE ROLL SOCIETY

w **piperollsociety.co.uk**

On the society's website you can find out more about pipe rolls, which were essentially yearly accounts produced by the medieval Exchequer.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

w **bit.ly/tna-guide-med**

TNA's guide to researching the medieval and early modern periods includes some useful links.

Death-Duty Registers

These records are an underused resource for 19th-century research and can now be easily searched online, as **Paul Blake** reveals

From 1796 until 1903, copies of wills and administrations were sent from the English and Welsh probate courts and registries to the Inland Revenue, where any tax owing was calculated. Information about the payment of legacies and other details about the winding-up of estates can therefore often be found in the death-duty registers, documenting what today we would call inheritance tax. These record the levy of three successive taxes, namely legacy duty, succession duty and estate duty.

Initially, duty was payable on legacies and residues of personal estates over £20 bequeathed by a will or left by people who died without a will ('intestate') – but not on leases, freeholds or real estate. Inheritance by close relatives (children, spouses, parents and grandparents) was also exempt.

From 1805, numerous inclusions and exemptions were introduced, so that the registers, depending on the date, contain references to varying numbers of wills and administrations. By 1815, about three quarters of all grants and administrations are included, and by 1857 there should be an entry for all estates except those under the threshold. However, if the deceased's assets were valued at less than £1,500 then frequently the authorities did not bother pursuing collection and the entries can be less extensive. The system ended in 1903, being replaced by a system of individual personal files, which were regularly destroyed after 30 years.

Accessing The Registers

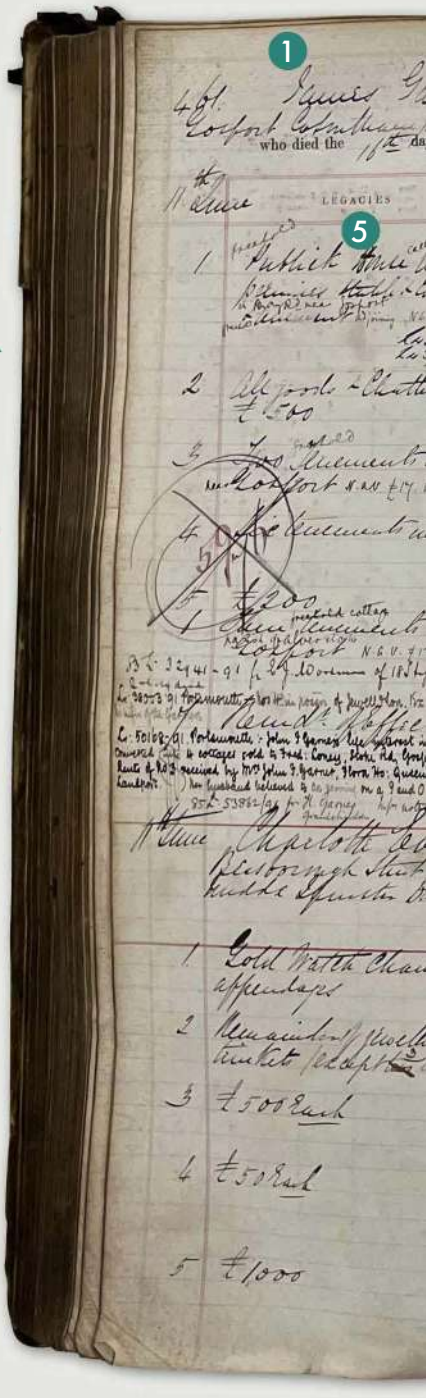
The registers and their indexes are held at The National Archives in Kew (TNA) in series IR 26 and IR 27 respectively. Both the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) and 'country court' (any court apart from the PCC) registers and indexes are collected in several separate series, which include both wills and administrations. Not all of the country-court registers survive, and many from the 1890s were destroyed by fire.

The registers contain large printed pages divided into columns into which details were written, spreading across a double-page spread. The column headings changed during the period of the registers, particularly in 1812, with the earlier registers recording less information. However, the material could include details of the deceased and their estate, details of the executors, and information about the beneficiaries.

Frequently, detailed information not obtainable from the will itself is included: for example, if a legatee had died then there might be reference to his or her own estate. Notes were sometimes made in the registers many years

Many entries can be difficult to interpret, because a system of abbreviations was used

Death-Duty Register,



1 Testator
James Garner was a victualler living in Gosport, Hampshire, who died on 16 November 1860. His entry in the register is rich with annotations and references for further research, both in other Inland Revenue records and elsewhere, many in red ink or pencil and made as late as 1906.

2 Date Of Will
The will was made on 13 November 1858 and proved on 28 May 1861 in the Principal Probate Registry.

3 Executors
The executors were Samuel Beazley of Brockhurst, Isaac Legg and Charles William Garner. Garner was a " steward on board one of the Ryde boats [in 18]81 and a private in the Royal Engineers [in 18]81".

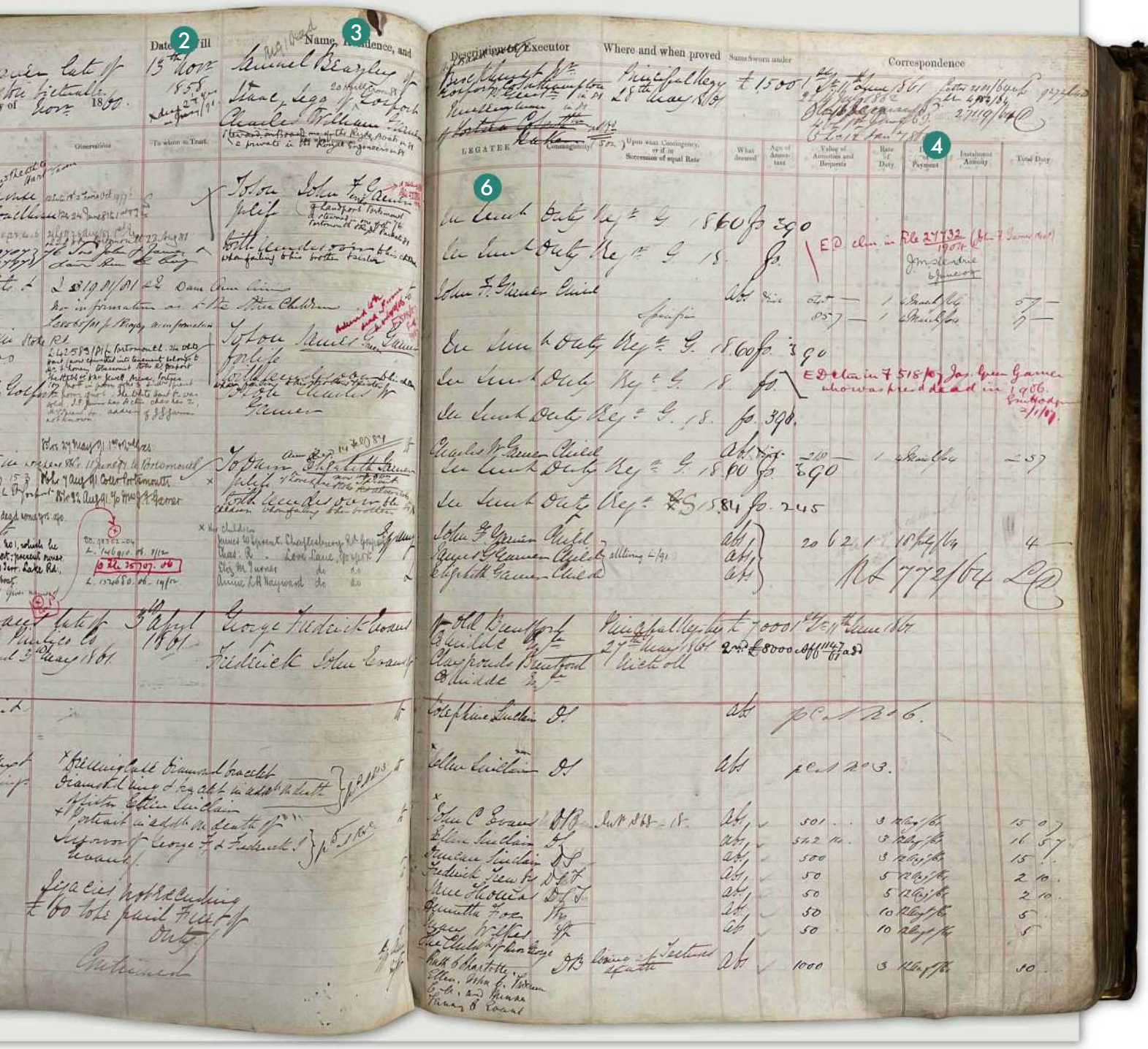
4 Duties
Several columns on the right-hand page provide information about the duties owed – in this case totalling £317 – and payments made.

5 Legacies
The legacies are clearly detailed, and in the next column are any observations relating to them. There are numerous annotations made at later dates regarding these legacies and the legatees.

6 Legatees
Two columns name the legatees and any consanguinity (relationship) to the testator.

1861

This record is held by The National Archives (**nationalarchives.gov.uk**) reference IR 26/2250 folio 461. It is not available digitally



after the original entry, such as the date of death of a spouse, the date of marriage of a beneficiary, changes of address, or reference to lawsuits. Some entries may lead to other registers or records, such as revisionary registers, residuary accounts (for money that was received as duty) and the succession registers. Introduced by the 1853 Succession Duty Act, these contain extracts relating to property for which there was a succession and continued until 1894.

Note that many entries in the registers can be difficult to interpret, because a complicated system of abbreviations was used. Thankfully TNA has created a research guide that explains them, which you can access via the following web page: **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/death-duties-1796-1903**.

Searching The Indexes

The original indexes to the registers (IR 27) are arranged annually by surname of the testator in roughly ▶

Wills such as this are far from the only records that might have been left behind when our relations died

alphabetical order, and give the court in which the probate was handled. From 1796 to 1811, each probate court was indexed separately. Fortunately, there are now several ways for researchers to search these indexes.

You can use TNA's online catalogue Discovery to search for entries in the 1796–1811 registers (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**), and download an entry for free if you sign in with your TNA user account. You can also search this TNA index on Ancestry via **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/70695**.

Members of Findmypast can search the indexes for 1796–1903, which will also provide an image of the index page, via the collection at **search.findmypast.co.uk/search-united-kingdom-records/index-to-death-duty-registers-1796-1903**. These are the most comprehensive indexes covering both the country courts and the PCC, and therefore the best starting point for your research.

In addition, FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**) has digitised all of the indexes and also the registers to about 1858. These can be examined at FamilySearch Family History Centers and Affiliate Libraries around the world, including TNA.

You can use TNA's catalogue to search for entries in the 1796–1811 registers

Microfilm Only

At TNA, the registers are available on microfilm to 1858, after which date the only option is to view the original registers.

Whether it is a will or an administration, the extra effort in examining the estate-duty registers can often prove to be very worthwhile, providing additional information about your ancestor and their possessions, as well as their family and the others who benefited from their death.

TOP TIP!

The indexes to the death-duty registers before 1858 can often help family historians identify the probate court where a will was proved or an administration granted.

PAUL BLAKE is a genealogist who specialises in Gibraltar research. He is also the author of several books include *Tracing Your Insolvent Ancestors* (Pen & Sword, 2019)

Resources

Take your research further

ARCHIVE

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
a **Kew, Richmond TW9 4DU**
t 020 8876 3444
w **nationalarchives.gov.uk**
In addition to the material described here, TNA holds numerous other series of records relating to death duties, as well as those created by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

BOOKS

The Wills of Our Ancestors
Stuart A Raymond
Pen & Sword, 2012
This handbook explains the purpose and usefulness of wills and other probate records to family historians. As well as England and Wales, the records of the Channel Islands, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland all feature.

Wills and Probate Records, 2nd Edn
Karen Grannum and Nigel Taylor
The National Archives, 2009
This guide, written for family historians, explains the key documents and institutions, as well as legal terms often encountered.

GETTY IMAGES

Q&A

Our team of experts offers tips and inspiration Edited By Claire Vaughan

Dave Annal is a genealogist, author and lecturer

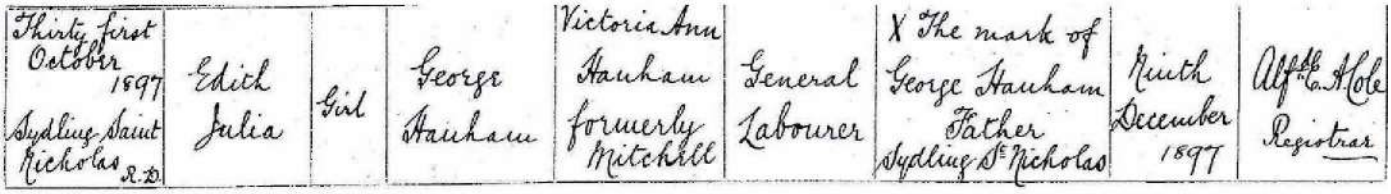
Katherine Cobb is a member of AGRA based in Somerset

Jayne Shrimpton is a professional dress historian and portrait specialist

Alan Stewart is a family history writer, and author of *Grow Your Own Family Tree*

Phil Tomaselli is a military family history expert and author

Peter Towey is vice-president of the Anglo-German Family History Society


Thirty first October 1897 | Edith Julia | Girl | George Hanham | Victoria Ann Hanham formerly Mitchell | General Labourer | X The mark of George Hanham Father Sydling St Nicholas | Ninth December 1897 | Alfred A. Hole Registrar

Treena has obtained a record of her great aunt Edith's birth, but other vital records are proving harder to trace

Where do I search for Edith and John Robert Turnbull?

Q I've hit a wall with my great aunt, Edith Julia Hanham. I found her birth certificate (Dorchester, December quarter, 1897) but can't find any parish records. In the 1901 census for Bere Regis, Dorset, she was Edith Julia Hanam, born in Sydling. In the 1911 census for Gussage All Saints, Dorset, she was Hannam, born Sydland, stepdaughter to head. She married John Robert Turnbull on 3 February 1918 in Horton, Dorset. After this, I can't find them. Can you give me any pointers?

Treena Everett

A I, too, found this couple very elusive. There's no evidence of a marriage anywhere in England except a reference on FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**) with the details you suggest. When I tracked it down, I found it was an entry in the register of banns at Horton, Dorset, published on 20 January, 27 January and 3 February 1918, between John Robert Turnbull, bachelor, of His Majesty's Forces (R. Can. G) and Edith Julia Hannam, spinster, of Horton.

I would interpret this to mean "Royal Canadian Guards". I see that there was a regiment in the Canadian Army designated 1st Regiment, Canadian Grenadier Guards from 29 December 1911. That might be his regiment, but it would involve research in the Canadian archives. I have not been able to find a John Robert Turnbull or John Turnbull in the Canadian military records who could fit. It does not help that we do not know how old he was.

As we cannot find the marriage in England, the likelihood is that it did not take place

As we cannot find the marriage in England, the likelihood is that it did not take place, even though the banns had been published on three consecutive Sundays.

Perhaps he got cold feet or was ordered to France, or maybe his military superiors refused permission, or there was an objection to the marriage in the Church. Possibly he was killed in France or Flanders.

I have Edith's birth certificate from which I see she was born on 31 October 1897. I cannot find a likely marriage or death for her in England or Wales after 1918, and I cannot find her in the 1921 census. There are several women in the 1939 Register with given names Edith Julia and born on 31 October 1897, but none is called Turnbull or Hannam. Few lived in the south of England, and none looks likely. But it might be worth researching these to be sure.

Peter Towey

HAVE YOU HIT A BRICK WALL? Please email your questions or family photographs to the following address: **wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk**

If selected, your query will be answered on these pages. Please note that we receive a large volume of correspondence each month, and cannot reply to each message individually. You are more likely to receive a response if you keep the question and background information concise (no more than 150 words), with a clear goal of enquiry.

Who were Emily Holes' ancestors?

Q My children's great grandmother, Emily Phillips née Holes, was born in Walkern, Hertfordshire, in 1887, to George Holes (1857–1918) and his wife Maria.

I've been led to believe that the name Holes was changed from Holtz or Holz during the First World War. However, Emily's great grandfather James Holes (born c1817) was recorded as being born in Malta on the 1871 census. Who were his parents? Were they British?

Janet Hall

A I doubt that the name was changed from something more Germanic-sounding. There are enough occurrences of it (and variants such as Oles and Olds) in Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties to show that the name has been present in the area for hundreds of years.

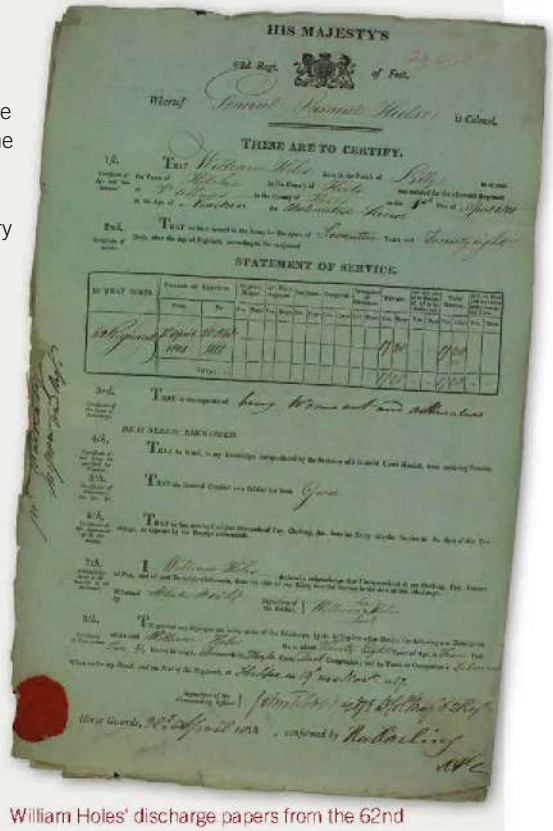
James married Elizabeth Butterfield in Walkern on 12 May 1833, and can be found living there in each of the census returns from 1841 to 1881. James' birthplace is inconsistent, but it seems clear that he was born overseas, probably in Malta, sometime within a year or two of 1811; this is highly suggestive of a family connection to the British Army.

James' marriage in 1833 is the earliest reference we have to the name Holes in the parish of Walkern, but a family of that name were living in the parish of Lilley, west of Hitchin, just 10 miles from Walkern. Was James connected to this family? This theory is strengthened by the discovery that one of them (William Holes/Olds, 1782–1842) served with the 62nd Regiment of Foot from 1801 to 1818 (see image).

We need to find out where the 62nd Regiment were stationed in the early 1810s. Online searches suggest that the 1st Battalion was in action in southern Italy and Sicily at the time, which seems promising. The regiment's muster rolls (at The National Archives; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**) should supply the answer.

There don't appear to be any surviving regimental birth registers for the 62nd Regiment, and a quick search of online sources for Malta doesn't turn up anything useful. There may not be a record of James' birth, but hopefully it will be possible to find the necessary evidence through other records.

Dave Annal



William Holes' discharge papers from the 62nd Regiment of Foot. Could he be James's father?

What happened to Abraham?

Q My great great grandmother's brother, Abraham Cottrell, was one of 14 children born to Benjamin Cottrell and Jane Hill, who lived in Bethnal Green. He only appears in the 1841 census: aged 17, living in Bethnal Green, with the family. He has no occupation – could he have had a disability? He is not mentioned in Benjamin's 1847 will, so I assume that he died before this. I also can't find a birth record for Benjamin.

Lindsay Farwell

A Like you, I couldn't find any mention of Abraham – other than in 1841. Since that census does not include relationships, there is a slight chance that Abraham was not Benjamin and Jane's son. However, even so, I can't find a possible baptism for Abraham, other than that in Hampshire, which you have already investigated.

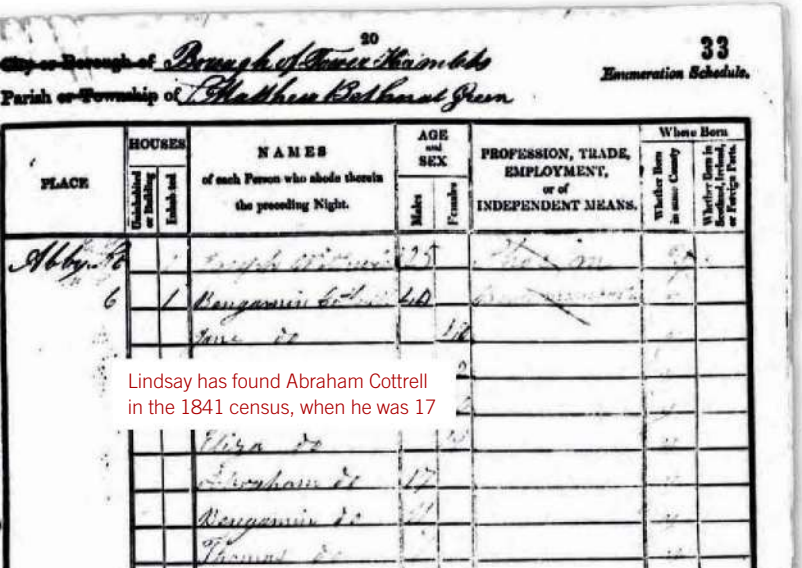
You wondered whether Abraham had some sort of health problem. Although possible, I think it unlikely, as no occupation is shown for any of his working-age siblings. Nevertheless, you could search Ancestry's collection 'UK, Lunacy Patients Admission Registers, 1846–1921' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9051**), or various other admissions registers indexed on the site and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**).

Since Abraham had siblings baptised at St Leonard's, Shoreditch, in 1823 and 1825, it seems likely that he was born in 1824. I suggest browsing the actual register for that year on Ancestry, in case his baptism has been incorrectly transcribed or omitted from the indexes.

As Abraham is not mentioned in Benjamin's will, it suggests he had died – unless his father had already made provision for him. Is it possible Abraham emigrated and his father provided for him when he left home?

In 1841, Benjamin is recorded as being born in Middlesex and his age at death suggests he was born in 1796/1797. People were sometimes unsure of their place and date of birth, so extend the search to neighbouring counties and include variations of 'Cottrell'. A Benjamin Catherall baptised at Great Gaddesden in 1792 may be worth following up.

Katherine Cobb



Lindsay has found Abraham Cottrell in the 1841 census, when he was 17

Picture Analysis

When was this photograph taken?

Q Can you date this photo of my relations? John Passmore (1838–1903) and wife Eliza (1844–1910) are both seated, and their seven surviving children appear with them. The boys at the front are Philip (1881–1949), Harry (1882–1953) and Charlie (1885–1961).
Lee Passmore

A This professional studio portrait depicts a family gathered together to record a special occasion, everyone smartly dressed and according to their ages. In group scenes with both sexes and various ages, the females' appearance usually provides a timeframe. Here, the formal dark daytime costumes of the older seated lady, the younger women centre-back and right, and 'teenager' back left confirm an 1890s date, their style indicating a more precise range of c1893–1897.

While the females all wear adult garments, as was usual for girls aged 15–17, the sons are differentiated by their clothes. The young men of working age wear adult three-piece tailored lounge/business suits comprising sober matching jackets, waistcoats and (unseen) long trousers, with regular shirts and neckties, like their father. The younger sons wear typical schoolboys' suits including Norfolk jackets with Eton collars and ribbon bow ties. These ensembles were teamed with below-the-knee knickerbockers, black woollen stockings and leather boots until a son progressed to adult dress at 12–14. If Philip is standing left, the year should be 1893–1895.
Jayne Shrimpton

1 COMPOSITION

The composition of these family members typifies large-group photographs: senior figures were seated centrally, young adults/older teenagers stood behind, older children to the sides, and small children placed in front.

2 EVENT

A special occasion will have prompted this photograph – probably the parents' 20th or 25th wedding anniversary.

3 NECKTIES

The youths wear striking white neckties. These formal accessories were reserved for special late Victorian and Edwardian occasions, eg weddings, landmark birthdays and significant anniversaries.

4 WOMEN'S SLEEVES

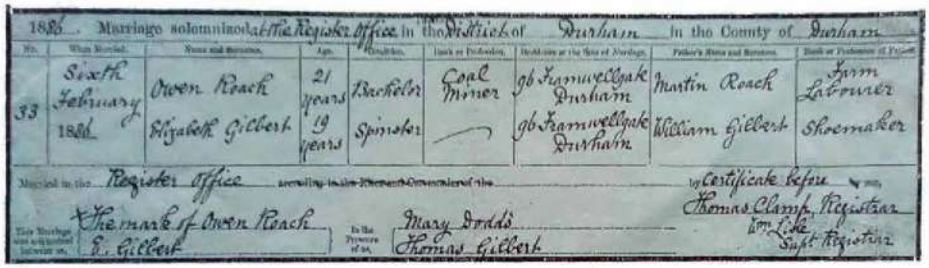
The key dating clue here is the females' full leg-of-mutton sleeves, the puffs' size and shape suggesting 1893–1897.

5 BEARD

John wears the beard still favoured by mature men in the 1890s, its full bushy style a traditional, conservative mode.

Why was my grandmother sent away?

Q I cannot find a death certificate for my great grandmother, Elizabeth Roach (née Gilbert). She was born in Durham in 1867, married Owen Roach in 1886, and had two daughters: Margaret (born 1886) and Sabina (born 1890). According to my grandmother, she was put on a train in Liverpool, aged about 10, and sent to live with her grandmother Gilbert in Durham – probably because her mother had died.
Doreen Reed



1886 Marriage solemnized at the Register Office in the District of Durham in the County of Durham

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
33	Sixth February 1886	Owen Roach	21 years	Bachelor	Coal Miner	gb Framwellgate Durham	Martin Roach	Farm Labourer
		Elizabeth Gilbert	19 years	Spinster		gb Framwellgate Durham	William Gilbert	Shoemaker

Married in the Register Office according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the by Certificate before Thomas Clamp, Registrar for Lake Sub-Registrar

This Marriage was solemnized between us, The mark of Owen Roach, E. Gilbert. In the Presence of us, Mary Dodds, Thomas Gilbert.

Doreen's great grandmother Elizabeth Gilbert married Owen Roach in 1886

A In the 1891 census, Owen Roach is in County Durham with Elizabeth and their two daughters. By 1901, he is living in Shirebrook, Mansfield, Derbyshire, with his second 'wife', Mary Elizabeth Smith, and three different children: Fred (aged eight), Gertie (four) and Ada (five). This means that Fred was born about 1893.

In that year, Elizabeth Roach was mentioned in the *Durham County Advertiser*, dated 31 March, as having been charged (alongside her brother, Thomas Gilbert) with assaulting Mary Alice West in Framwellgate, Durham, on 27 March. Thomas was fined, but the case against Elizabeth was dismissed.

I take it that Elizabeth Roach's daughter Margaret was your grandmother. Her maternal grandmother, also named Margaret, was living alone in Durham in the 1901 census (aged 70), so it looks as though the young Margaret didn't return to Durham until after the 1901 census was taken.

I found her as a servant in the 1911 census in County Durham, where she married John Reed the following year. Her sister Sabina married Charles John Dunning in 1913.

Although they had been together for about 30 years, Owen Roach didn't marry Mary Elizabeth Smith until 1929, which suggests that at least one of them was still married to a previous spouse.

Elizabeth Roach and her daughters may have been living with another man in 1901 and using his surname, although I could not find them, nor Sabina in 1911. Owen and Mary's marriage certificate may tell us more.
Alan Stewart

TOP TIP **If you're looking for a group of people who you think were living together but you don't know the surname they used, the census family search option on TheGenealogist (thegenealogist.co.uk) lets you look for groupings by first name only.**

When did Thomas Peacock die?

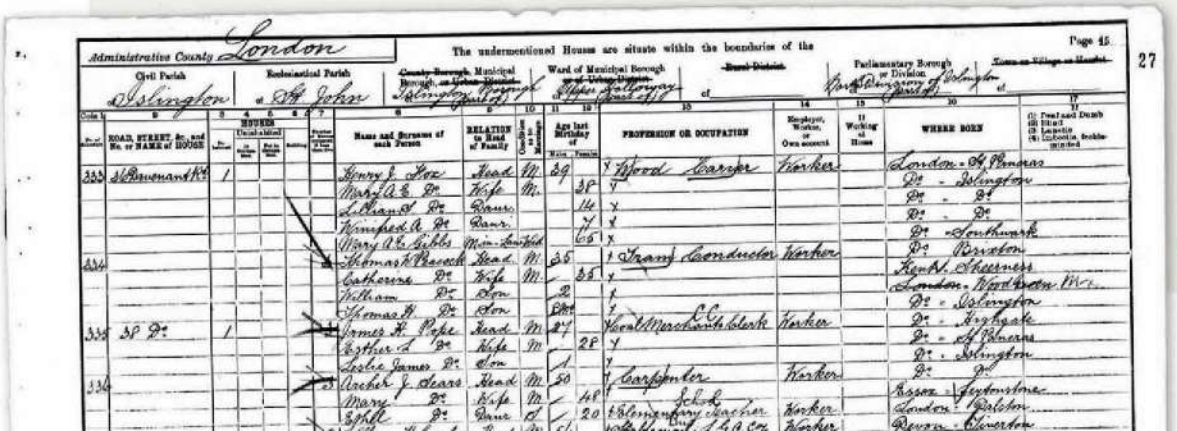
Q Thomas William Peacock (born 1864, Brixton) married my great great aunt, Catherine Ann George, in 1897. They had three sons, and lived in Wandsworth. Thomas last appears in the electoral registers in 1913. In the 1921 census, Catherine is a widow in Lambeth. What happened to Thomas?
Judie Payne

A I found two possible deaths for Thomas: one registered as Peacock, the other Pocock. That of Thomas William Peacock, in 1915, was promising – except that his widow was Sarah not Catherine. Could Thomas have been a bigamist? Searches of censuses and parish registers proved this was not the case, but that there were two Thomas William Peacocks, of similar age, living in South London.

Since Thomas could not be found in the 1921 census or the 1939 Register, which I searched by date of birth as well as by name, I considered whether he had emigrated. Indexes of passengers leaving the UK are available on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), and include one possible entry. However, looking at those travelling with him, he is not 'your' Thomas.

Next, I wondered whether Thomas died in the First World War. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's database at **cwgc.org** lists two Thomas Peacocks of unknown age; however, their places of birth exclude them. Among military records, I found the Royal Artillery attestation of Thomas' son, Thomas Henry. This names his mother as next of kin. While not proof that his father was dead, it suggests that Thomas had died by 1918.

Everything points to Thomas dying in the 1910s, but where is his death certificate? Original certificate information is copied and transcribed several times; from the copy the registrar sent to the General Register Office to online indexes. I suggest you contact Lambeth Register Office (**lambeth.gov.uk/births-deaths-ceremonies-citizenship**), and ask them to search the originals.
Katherine Cobb



Administrative County London — The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the — Page 45 — 27

Civil Parish Islington — Ecclesiastical Parish St John — Ward of Municipal Borough Upper Holloway — Parliamentary Borough or Division Holloway

Schedule No.	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Uninhabited	HOUSES Inhabited	HOUSES Building	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age last Birthday of Males	Age last Birthday of Females	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lunatic (4) Imbecile, feeble-minded
335	36 Davenant Rd		1		Henry J. Fox	Head	M	59		Wood Carver	Worker		London - St Pancras	
					Mary A. E. "	Wife	M		58				Do - Islington	
					Leonard "	Son		14					Do - Do	
					Winifred A. "	Daur		7					Do - Southwark	
					Mary A. E. Gibbs	Mother-in-law			65				Do - Brixton	
336					Thomas W. Peacock	Head	M	55		Tram Conductor	Worker		Kent, Sheerness	
					Catherine "	Wife	M		55				London - Wandsworth	
					William "	Son		22					Do - Islington	
					Thomas H. "	Son		20					Do - Holgate	
337	38 Do		1		James H. Pope	Head	M	27		Head Merchant's Clerk	Worker		Do - Islington	
					Esther A. "	Wife	M		28				Do - Islington	
					Leslie James "	Son		1					Do - Do	
338					Archer J. Sears	Head	M	50		Carpenter	Worker		Essex - Leytonstone	
					Mary "	Wife	M		48	School			London - Holborn	
					Ethel "	Daur		20		Elementary Teacher	Worker		Devon - Ilfracombe	

Thomas Peacock was living at 36 Davenant Road in Islington in 1901

What can you tell me about my chef great grandfather?

Q My great grandfather, Ernest Arthur Witherick, worked as a chef in the early 1900s. I am intrigued by this photograph of him (he's the older chef holding his knives and sitting down). Can you tell me what regiment he was cooking for, where and when the photo might have been taken, and anything else that may help me find out more about his career?
Linda Elliott

LINDA ELLIOTT was curious about this photo showing her great grandfather

Ernest Arthur Witherick is seated second from right

A This is an open-air photograph of the staff of a Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) unit's Officers' Mess at an annual camp somewhere in southern England in the early 1920s. The Red Cross symbol, clearly visible on the sleeves of the two older soldiers, could only be worn by RAMC soldiers, because it indicated medical staff and offered some protection from attack. Both men have all three First World War campaign medals – the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal (left to right, in that order) – which were probably issued around 1921/1922. The Mess Tent sign (although hard to read) indicates that it's for RAMC officers, suggesting other Officers' Messes, for other units, are nearby, so it's part of a large exercise.

Army officers ate army rations (supplemented by what they might buy locally) on active service, but generally ate better than their men in peacetime, having their own mess and more money. This was probably a Territorial Army RAMC unit where almost all of the officers worked in general practice or private hospitals, but were available to serve immediately when required. Although there were regular RAMC units before, during and after the First World War, the vast majority were Territorials (part-timers training in the evenings and weekends). They might be a Field Ambulance unit (moving and treating casualties), or part of a Field Hospital.

The two young soldiers (at the rear) are probably 'skivvies' for fetching and carrying, while the two older soldiers probably ran the unit's mess and bar in peacetime. The three civilians comprise Ernest, with his chef's hat, who was probably hired for the occasion (the local press mention his skill) with his young assistant (a son?). The smartly dressed civilian was probably hired to manage the waiting staff, who would be the officers' servants.

Witherick is not a common name, particularly when searched in combination with chef, but there are several mentions of Ernest and his son, Francis William (also a chef), in local newspapers – especially in the South Norwood area. One point of interest is that I can't find him advertising himself for hire (some chefs specifically advertised themselves to army messes), which suggests that his reputation, at least locally, was advertisement enough.

One newspaper article refers to him having cooked for the Crown Prince Frederick of Germany on his visit for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Other members of what I assume are your family are mentioned, including a Maggie Witherick, from Croydon, who it appears cooked for the prime minister Edward Heath in 1972.

The exact exercise and RAMC unit, I can't say. Given that Ernest seems to have lived most of his working life in, or near, South Norwood, it's likely to have been based in that area and the camp itself somewhere on the South Coast. There are several mentions of Surrey Territorial camps taking place in the 1920s if you search the press. Many seem to have taken place on the Sussex Coast. The websites **ramc-ww1.com/index.html** and **armymuseums.org.uk/listing/army-medical-services-museum** may be able to help you further in identifying the RAMC unit.
Phil Tomaselli

Could this soldier be my great uncle?

Q Can you help me identify this soldier? It would be good to know the year and regiment if possible. He looks very like my late great uncle.
Robert Finlay

A This photo shows a Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) soldier, and was taken fairly early in 1915 after he's done his basic training and been given home leave – probably before active service.

You don't name your great uncle, so I can't identify him, but I can offer some hints as to where to look. The National Archives' (TNA's) website has the best indexed records for the Medal Index Cards (MICs) created when medal entitlements had been worked out and personalised medals were made. The research guide at **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-medal-index-cards-1914-1920** explains the MICs, and offers a search facility into which you can input his name and Royal Army Medical Corps as his corps (for 'ordinary' regiments, such as infantry and cavalry, put the regiment's name in this box also). Hopefully this will reveal your man – if there's more than one, your great uncle will probably have been awarded the 1914/15 Star.

Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) also has images of the medal rolls. From there, it may be possible to locate the soldier's service record, if it survives; most were destroyed during the Second World War. If you can find it, it should give an indication of the RAMC unit(s) that he served with. Their War Diaries, in TNA's series WO 95, can be downloaded for free via TNA's online catalogue Discovery (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**).
Phil Tomaselli

1 CAP BADGE
The cap badge is a laurel wreath surrounding a serpent coiled round a rod, the RAMC badge. The cap itself seems newly issued – soldiers who'd served for long generally removed the cap stiffeners for ease and comfort, especially in the trenches.

2 RED CROSS
The Red Cross symbol could only be worn by proper medical staff, offering some protection from attack. Only RAMC men wore it – not even regimental first-aiders.

3 TUNIC
Military tunics usually had pleated pockets. However, to speed up production these were omitted from late 1914 into 1915, although they were back later that year.

4 BELT
The old snake-buckle belt fastener was reintroduced at the end of August 1914. Your photo has to be after that date.

5 CANE
The walking-out cane (or swagger stick) was pre-First World War standard equipment, then quickly dropped. They are rarely seen after mid-1915.

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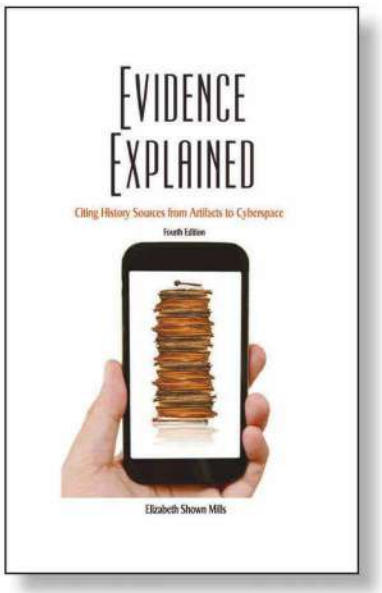

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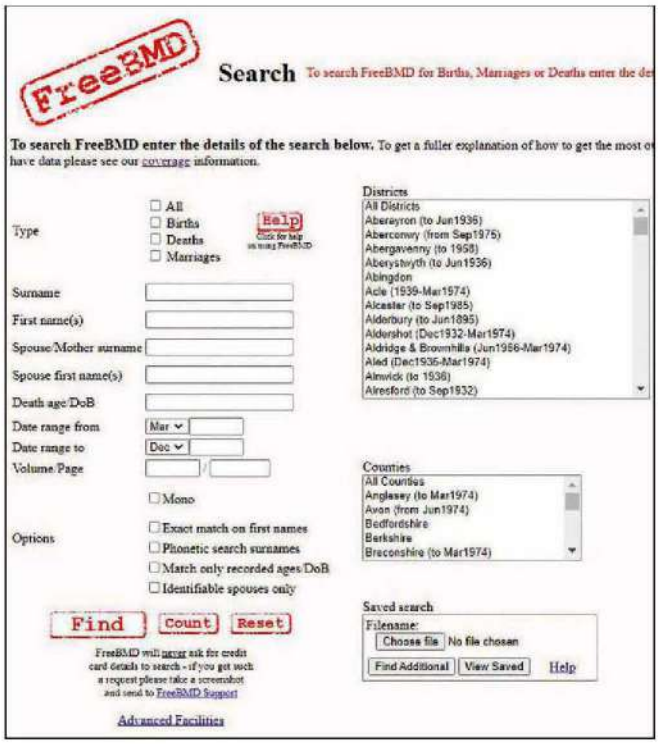
GETTY IMAGES

Yorkshire Delight

Workers at Goodall, Backhouse and Company's factory in Leeds pack bottles of Yorkshire Relish, 1906

On 25 June 1902 *The Tatler* discussed the preparations for a meal for "500,000 of the London poor" to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII and his wife Alexandra. "Manufacturers of edibles and drinkables were not behindhand in their eagerness to associate themselves in the good cause", and the menu included chocolate from Rowntree, ale from Bass, and 25,000 bottles of Yorkshire Relish. Goodall, Backhouse and Company could trace its origins back to 1853, when Robert Goodall set up a chemist's shop in Leeds, and its savoury sauce, similar to the Worcestershire variety, was launched in 1865. The firm was selling 13 million bottles a year by 1907, and had 350 employees at the dawn of the First World War. The business was sold off in 1959, and in 2002 a box containing company documents including handwritten recipes was discovered in an old factory by a demolition worker. This archive was auctioned off to a private collector in 2011, but a Leeds Museums video has more information about the firm's rich history: **tinyurl.com/yt-relish**.



Create a master index of BMDs for a surname

Debbie Kennett explains how to combine BMD data from FreeBMD and other websites

Birth, marriage and death records (BMDs) form the backbone of our research. Many websites provide access to the information in the General Register Office's (GRO's) civil indexes of BMDs for England and Wales, which began on 1 July 1837. However, the database at FreeBMD (**freebmd.org.uk**), which is being built by volunteers, is the best starting point because of its flexible searches, although the site's coverage only runs from September 1837 to December 1997.

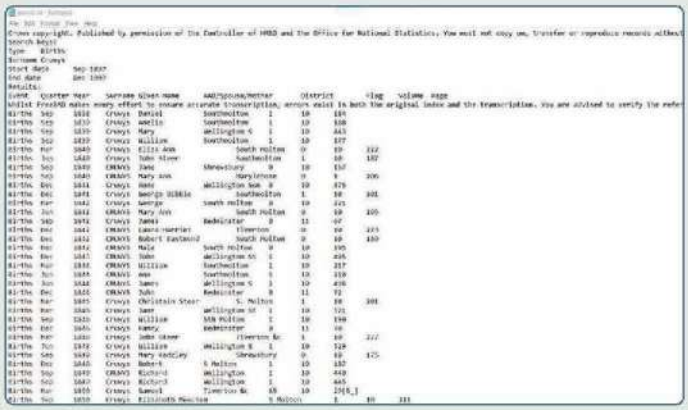
You can also download a comma-separated values (CSV) file of all the index entries for a particular surname. This data can be converted into a spreadsheet, and tidied up to provide a master index of all the occurrences of the surname. The spreadsheet can then be supplemented with additional information from other websites to fill in missing years, and to provide important extra details.

A master index is especially useful for a one-name study, but is valuable for any researcher. You can use it as a check list to make sure you don't allocate the same birth or death to multiple people. It will also help you identify additional children when compiling family groups, and to track your progress. For common surnames, you can compile a spreadsheet focusing on specific counties or registration districts.

TOP TIP!

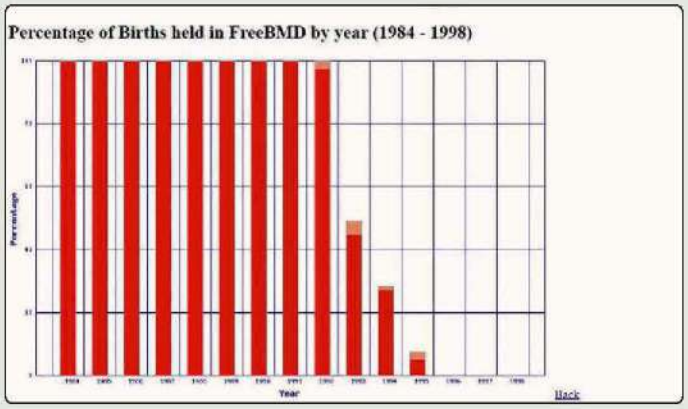
Surnames are frequently mistranscribed. Check for mistranscriptions and surname variants when searching, and add these entries to your spreadsheet.

1 Search For Births Visit **freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl**. Select 'Births', type the name in the 'Surname' field, then choose 'Sep 1837' to 'Dec 1997' for the date range. Click 'Find'. On the next page, click 'Download' to save a CSV file of the search results. The maximum number of results that can be displayed is 3,000, so with a common name you may need to run multiple narrowed searches.

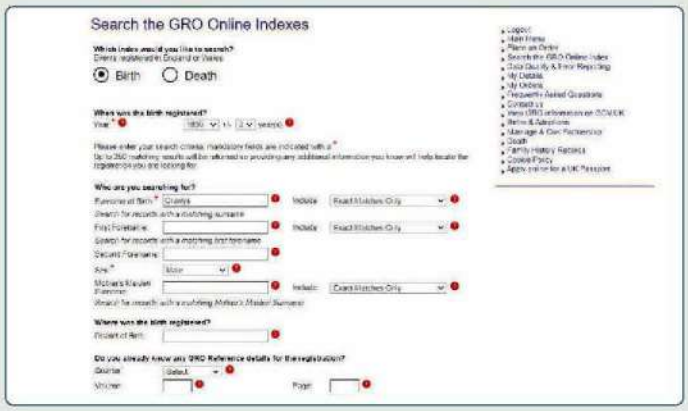


2 Copy Birth Data To Excel Open the CSV file in a text editor such as Notepad, choose 'Edit > Select all' then 'Edit > Copy'. Create a blank spreadsheet in Excel (or a similar program). Choose 'Edit > Paste'. Remove extraneous information such as header information, and columns for events and flags. Adjust column widths and fonts as desired, then save. Give 'Sheet1' the new name 'Births'.

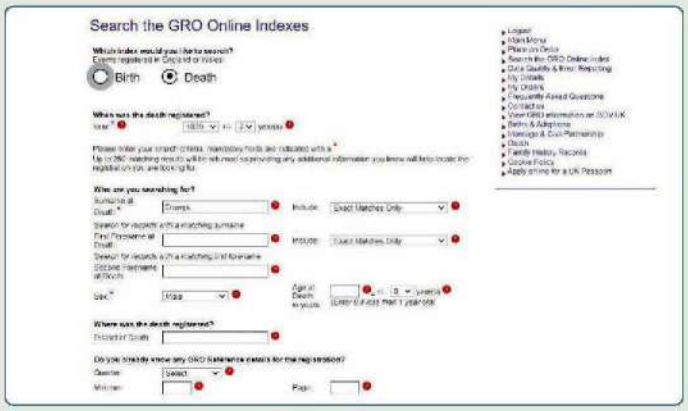
3 Copy Marriages And Deaths Create two new tabs in your spreadsheet: 'Marriages' and 'Deaths'. Return to FreeBMD and run searches for marriages and deaths rather than births, again pasting the edited CSV data into your spreadsheet. Add columns as desired, eg one named 'Allocated' where you can tick off entries that you've allocated to your tree. You now have a working master index.



4 **Check FreeBMD's Coverage** Charts at **freebmd.org.uk/progress.shtml** reveal which years' records are missing. The site's coverage is essentially complete up to 1990, but there are gaps in later years. However, the site's volunteers are adding entries all the time. Visit **freebmd.org.uk/saved-search-help.html** to learn how to save a search, so you can easily return to collect additional entries.



5 **Search The GRO's Births** The FreeBMD indexes do not include the mother's maiden name for births before September 1911, but this information can be extracted manually from the GRO's indexes (**www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content**) and added to your spreadsheet. The GRO's indexes also include full forenames, rather than using initials for middle names, and have births going up to 2021.



6 **Search The GRO's Deaths** Similarly the FreeBMD indexes do not include age at death before 1866, but this is included in the GRO's indexes, which also have deaths up to 2021. Both the death indexes and birth indexes have been newly transcribed, and you may find entries on the GRO's site that are missing from FreeBMD.

7 **Search Local Indexes** The invaluable website UKBMD (**ukbmd.org.uk**) provides links to local register-office databases and transcriptions based on the original register-office indexes. As a result you will sometimes find entries you cannot locate on the GRO's website or FreeBMD. UKBMD is particularly useful for extracting information about more recent marriages.

8 **Add Data From Ancestry** The subscription site Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has the England and Wales BMD indexes up to 2005 for marriages and 2007 for births and deaths. Parish registers for numerous counties have also been digitised and indexed, so you can extract additional information to add to your master index. Many users have attached scans of BMD records to their trees as well.

9 **Add Data From Findmypast** The subscription site Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) has the England and Wales BMD indexes up to 2006 for births, 2005 for marriages and 2007 for deaths, and indexes and images of parish registers as well. 'Pro' subscribers can also search historic newspapers for BMD announcements.

HURRAY FOR

HUTS

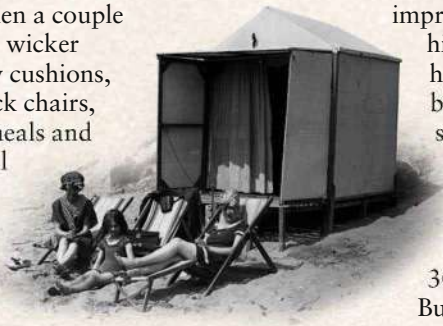
Caroline Roope dives into the rich history of beach huts and bathing machines

Queen Victoria tried a bathing machine in 1847 at her private residence on the Isle of Wight

GETTY IMAGES

Bathing machines in Bognor Regis, Sussex, 1890

This year make up your mind to bring your beach house up to date, for a few shillings will work wonders," recommended the *Hawick News and Border Chronicle* in the summer of 1934. "Cover the floor with attractive coloured matting and have a rubber mat to keep in front of the portable methylated spirit stove or cooking apparatus," the writer suggested. "Then a couple of comfortable wicker chairs with gay cushions, and several deck chairs, one table for meals and perhaps a small wooden chest for keeping eatables and odds and ends, and your hut is completely furnished."



Two women sunbathe outside their beach hut with a young girl, c1930

For our forebears, the iconic beach hut was synonymous with seaside fun. These humble little constructions, in their bright and breezy colours, have been part of the seaside landscape since the late 19th century. But their origins date back much further to when taking a dip was more about modesty and medicine than leisure and picnics on the sand.

The static structures that we recognise today owe their existence to their four-wheeled 18th-century forebears – the bathing machine. Sea bathing was often prescribed as a cure for various ailments. One Sussex doctor, Richard Russell, claimed in his book *A Dissertation Concerning the Use of Sea Water in Diseases of the Glands* (1753, available in the Internet Archive at **archive.org/details/dissertationconc00russ**) that he had seen spectacular improvements in his patients' health after they bathed in the sea at Brighton, including a farmer's wife with colic who had "voided 300 stones".

But the fashion for 'sea cures' posed a dilemma. Firstly, the patient needed to be mobile enough to walk to the water, and secondly, propriety had to be maintained in public.

An Ingenious Invention

A Quaker named Benjamin Beale proposed the ideal solution in 1753 – a horse-drawn box that the patient could board from a 'bathing room' at the top of the beach. Once inside the machine, the female patient could change into a loose smock, assisted by a guide or 'dipper', while males would remove all their clothes, since at this time men tended to bathe naked. Once the box was positioned in deep water, a sophisticated hood was unfurled into the sea using a system of lines operated by the driver, giving the occupant complete privacy while 'dipping'. "Its structure is simple, but perfectly convenient," wrote one customer in a contemporary document in the Wellcome Collection archive. "By the aid of this contrivance, Ladies… may now enjoy all the pleasures of bathing, whenever they please."

By 1755, several variations of the machine had come into use at a number of locations. An advert from the same year for "Bathing in Salt Water" at Deal on the Kent coast promoted a "New invented original machine". It was used without a horse and included a "bath form'd in the natural sea, all inclos'd and rail'd, which renders it both secure and private". The price was 1s for one dip or a guinea for exclusive use for the season, including a "Proper person appointed to attend the Ladies".

Sturdy-looking beach huts in Walton-on-the-Naze in Essex, c1900

GETTY IMAGES

Martha Gunn 1726–1815

Take the plunge with the Priestess of the Bath

If the medicine men of the 18th century wanted proof of the health benefits of sea bathing, they need look no further than dipper and royal favourite Martha Gunn, who died at the remarkable age of 89. Born in 1726, Gunn spent most of her life at the popular seaside resort of Brighton, operating bathing machines for women. She became a recognisable figure in the town, particularly for her robust stature and "face like a dried sponge" (according to an ungallant comment in *The Atlas*) which she developed through years of lifting and dipping bathers.

Gunn worked well into old age, and when she was 78 she was still dipping ladies every day, becoming the most famous dipper of the age. "Many a bathing beauty, by this venerable Priestess of the Bath, is soused over the head and ears in the pickling-tub of Neptune," wrote the *Hampshire Telegraph* in 1804. She was a well-known favourite of the Prince of Wales (the future George IV), and allegedly had free access to the royal kitchens. Her portrait still exists in the Royal Collection (**rct.uk/collection/453067/martha-gunn**).

Martha died in Brighton in 1815, and the press reported that the whole town came out to witness her funeral.

Dippers became a familiar sight on beaches across the country, and it was also part of their job to enter the water and encourage a reluctant bather under the waves. Many cartoons of the period feature cheerful-looking men and women up to their waists in water, but the role could also be perilous. In the summer of 1805, the *Morning Post* reported that "One of the bathing machines, having proceeded too far into the sea, owing to the carelessness of the driver… floated out of the harbour." The lady and dipper inside started shrieking, but were saved by a gentleman who jumped in and cut the rope tying the horse to the machine. With further assistance, the machine was dragged back up to the beach, "to the no small joy of the fair dippers, who were well content to forego the pleasurable advantages of bracing their delicate frames".

An attendant stands by bathing machines in the early 20th century

GETTY IMAGES

Fit For A King – And Queen

By the end of the 18th century pleasure-seekers were also taking a dip for the fun of it, rather than for their health. This was an even riskier endeavour, given that few people could swim, but when bathing machines received the royal seal of approval, swimming in the sea became de rigueur. George III was the first to take a dip, trying the waters at Weymouth, Dorset, in 1789 to the sound of the national anthem played by a band concealed in a nearby bathing machine. All of the bathing machines on the beach were decorated in honour of his visit, along with the rest of the royal party and dippers.

Queen Victoria also tried a bathing machine in 1847. Her experience was less conspicuous than her grandfather's and took place at her private residence Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. She later wrote in one journal, which is available at **queenvictoriasjournals.org/home.do**, "Drove down to the beach with my maids & went into the bathing machines, where I undressed & bathed in the sea, (for the 1st time in my life) a very nice bathing woman attending me. I thought it delightful till I put my head under water, when I thought I should be stifled."

Appealing To All Classes

However, hiring a bathing machine was expensive, and originally it was a pursuit that only the wealthy could afford. But that changed in the mid-19th century as transport networks grew and any opportunity to escape the smog-filled cities, if only for a day, was an exciting prospect for the working classes. The use of bathing machines, particularly on beaches segregated into male and female areas, became mandatory. This meant that those on the lowest wages could only paddle in the shallows. Some resorts introduced shared bathing 'saloons' with several changing cubicles inside, providing a cheaper option for those watching their pennies.

During the Edwardian and interwar periods, beach tents began to appear by the sea. These static but semi-permanent changing rooms could be hired by the day, week or summer season, and looked much like their inland equivalent but included a "wooden floor, locker, table, chair and mirror", according to a 1929 advertisement. The lack of wheels meant that the bather had to walk to the water in their bathing costume, and the tent was often at the mercy of the weather. An early user in 1891 had an embarrassing experience when a strong breeze blew over the tent in which she and her daughters were changing. "One rolled herself up in the folds of the little tent and there remained resolutely until the cover was re-erected," an eyewitness told the *Buckingham Advertiser*. The family was ▶

Female bathers could preserve their modesty by changing in a bathing machine

GETTY IMAGES

▶ eventually helped by a bathing-machine man, who provided shelter for the undressed girls. Next morning "they sought the safer shelter of the machine, and the beach tent disappeared".

Exclusive Access

The ideal solution to such weather-related woes was a more substantial building – the wooden beach hut. Some of the earliest were owned by seafront hoteliers and lodging houses for the exclusive use of their guests. The desirability of the modest beach hut meant that they were often top of the billing in newspaper articles marketing seaside resorts. "Felixstowe offers superior advantages for bathing," announced the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* in 1908. "The bathing is delightful, and the delight is not lessened by the fact that it is perfectly safe… The bathing tents or beach huts are substantial wood erections, which can be hired for various periods."

Owning or renting a beach hut was also an aspiration for many pleasure-seekers in the early 20th century, and the advent of motorised transport brought trips to the seaside within reach of all but the poorest.

As soon as the sun came out, newspapers were quick to review "Out of Town" excursions and seaside resorts. The *Daily Telegraph* highlighted 26 popular coastal destinations in 1906, praising Bexhill on the Sussex coast for "the facilities offered to visitors for the hire of beach huts and tents" which "couldn't fail to be appreciated".

With the Government-mandated necessity of holidaying at home during the Second World War, beach huts seemed to multiply, forming row upon row along our seafronts and promenades – creating a seasonal community of holidaymakers and daytrippers. Such is the legacy of the beach hut that for many of us it forms a nostalgic backdrop to our favourite family holidays.

The idea of a home from home offering a view of the sea and space to relax was just as appealing to our ancestors as it is for us, and in its basic form the beach hut has changed little in the past 100 years. As one newspaper put it in 1934, the beach hut gives the "crowning touch of pleasure to a seaside holiday" and provides a shelter that is "always at your disposal in case of possible showers". Considering Britain's unpredictable summer weather, that's definitely priceless.

CAROLINE ROOPE is a writer and researcher specialising in social history. Her latest book is *Nineteenth Century Female Explorers* (Pen & Sword, 2023)

Resources

Take your research further

BOOKS

Beach Huts
Karen Averby
Amberley, 2017
Averby explains how the landscape of the beach and seaside resort has changed over the centuries – and with it, its architecture and amenities.

Beach Huts and Bathing Machines
Kathryn Ferry
Shire, 2009
Ferry's history of beach huts explores how fashions shaped their design and development.

WEBSITES

BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE
w **britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**
Articles and adverts related to beach huts can be found here. Newspapers published in the 18th century are a rich source of information on the bathing machine, which was considered a remarkable new invention.

BRITISH PATHÉ
w **britishpathe.com**
This website includes plenty of short films depicting the seaside holiday over the decades. Highlights include *Let Us Now Take a Trip to the Seaside* (1898), which depicts bathing machines, beach huts and tents (**tinyurl.com/bp-let-trip**); *Seaside Day* (1954), which was filmed in Margate (**tinyurl.com/bp-sea-day**); and *Eve at Ostend* (1923), showing "glamour girls" and a horse-drawn machine with a distinctly continental flavour (**tinyurl.com/bp-eve-ost**).

WELLCOME COLLECTION
w **wellcomecollection.org**
The Wellcome Collection holds several 18th-century reports and manuscripts relating to bathing in the sea for health benefits, many of which are digitised and can be viewed online.

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EUREKA MOMENT
How a reader broke down a research brick wall

'I Used DNA To Find My Grandfather, And Traced His War Medals'

Sonia Limm's father David spent decades wondering who his father was, until modern technology gave him a breakthrough. They've discovered a wartime hero who had a promising career as a boxer, says **Gail Dixon**

The seismic shifts that resulted from the Second World War led to many family secrets. Large numbers of British children grew up not knowing the identity of one or both parents, and this created lifelong consequences.

DNA testing can be marvellous for breaking down genealogical brick walls, but for some people it goes much further and is genuinely life-changing. Sonia Limm shares her family's emotive story, which dates back to a wartime romance.

SONIA LIMM is a civil servant and lives in North Yorkshire. She has been researching her family history for 34 years

My Brick Wall

My father David Brian Heath was born illegitimately on 20 September 1944, in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. His mother Doreen Heath was discharged from the Military Police for being pregnant, and what's more was disowned by her family too.

Doreen provided well for Dad under the circumstances. She worked in a munitions factory to make ends meet, and continued to work hard all her life. She married Edward Limm in 1946, who Dad believed was his biological father. It was a challenging relationship.

Before Dad married Mum he needed his birth certificate, and it was then that he discovered that Edward wasn't his birth father. The certificate simply stated "father unknown".

Naturally Dad asked Doreen who his real father was, but it was a secret that she took to her grave. All she would say was that she met him while working in the Military Police, and that he was serving in the Army. Not knowing the truth was a heavy burden for Dad throughout his life.

My Eureka Moment

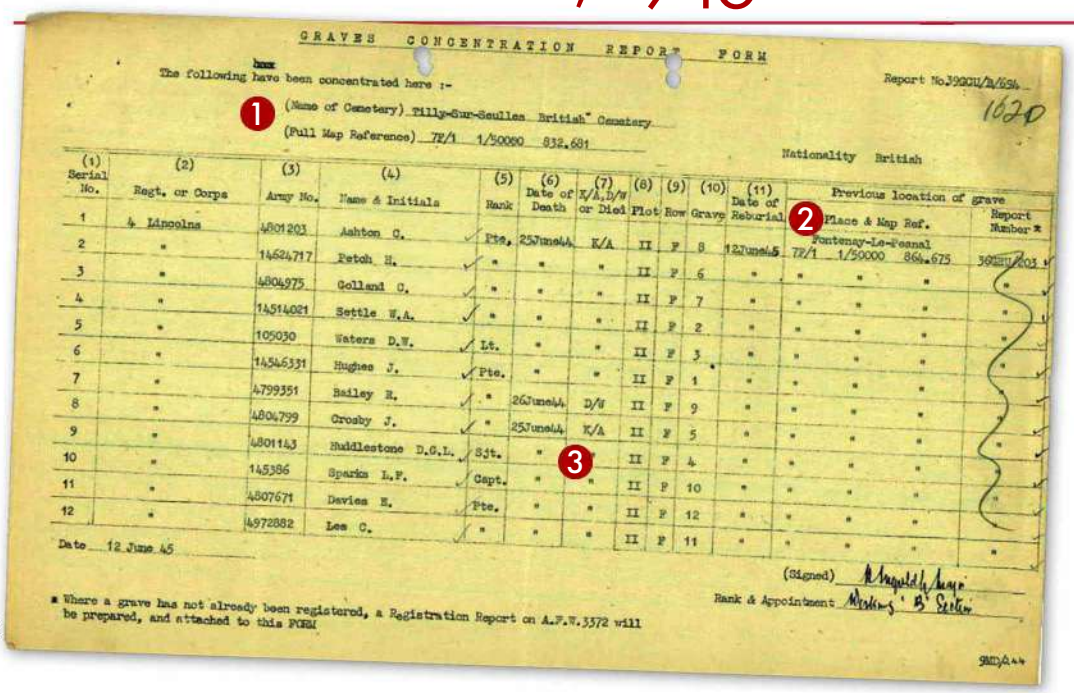
The Covid-19 years reignited our interest in family history, and I contemplated taking a DNA test with Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**). Someone might hold the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle.

I discussed it with Dad, and we took our tests in 2021. Dad's matched with three members of a family called Huddlestone, and these people turned out to be his first cousins. Finally this allowed us to find Dad's natural father, who was called Douglas George Lilburn Huddlestone.

After 76 years of searching, this came as a shock for Dad, who never believed that he would

War Graves Report, 1945

Sonia found this vital record on the website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (**cwgc.org**)



GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM

The following have been concentrated here :-

Report No.39GGU/B/654

1620

(Name of Cemetery) Tilly-Sur-Seulles British Cemetery

(Full Map Reference) 7F/1 1/50000 832.681

Nationality British

(1) Serial No.	(2) Regt. or Corps	(3) Army No.	(4) Name & Initials	(5) Rank	(6) Date of Death	(7) K/A, D/W or Died	(8) Plot	(9) Row	(10) Grave	(11) Date of Reburial	Previous location of grave: Place & Map Ref.	Report Number *
1	4 Lincolns	4801203	Ashton C.	Pte.	25June44	K/A	II	F	8	12June45	Fontenay-Le-Pesnal 7F/1 1/50000 864.675	39GBU/203
2	"	14624717	Petch H.	"	"	"	II	F	6	"	" " "	"
3	"	4804975	Golland C.	"	"	"	II	F	7	"	" " "	"
4	"	14514021	Settle W.A.	"	"	"	II	F	2	"	" " "	"
5	"	105030	Waters D.W.	Lt.	"	"	II	F	3	"	" " "	"
6	"	14546331	Hughes J.	Pte.	"	"	II	F	1	"	" " "	"
7	"	4799351	Bailey R.	"	26June44	D/W	II	F	9	"	" " "	"
8	"	4804799	Crosby J.	"	25June44	K/A	II	F	5	"	" " "	"
9	"	4801143	Huddlestone D.G.L.	Sjt.	"	"	II	F	4	"	" " "	"
10	"	145386	Sparks L.F.	Capt.	"	"	II	F	10	"	" " "	"
11	"	4807671	Davies E.	Pte.	"	"	II	F	12	"	" " "	"
12	"	4972882	Lee C.	"	"	"	II	F	11	"	" " "	"

Date 12 June 45

(Signed) [illegible]

Rank & Appointment Working 'B' Section

* Where a grave has not already been registered, a Registration Report on A.F.W.3372 will be prepared, and attached to this FORM

9MD/044

1 Second Burial Sergeant Douglas Huddlestone was reburied at Tilly-Sur-Seulles War Cemetery on 12 June 1945.

2 First Burial Sonia's grandfather was originally buried almost a year earlier at Fontenay-Le-Pesnel (here spelled "Pesnal"), where he fell.

3 Location The exact location of Douglas' remains is indicated by plot, row and grave.

Left: Sonia's grandfather Douglas Huddlestone
Right: Douglas is fifth from the left on the front row in this photograph of the 3rd Mortar Platoon

discover the truth. Dad was excited to learn about his father, but also nervous that he might be rejected by his new-found family. I reached out to them, and they welcomed us with open arms.

My Breakthrough

I researched Douglas online and discovered that he was born in Spilsby, Lincolnshire, in 1918. He worked for the Mid-Lincolnshire Electric Supply Company, but his passion in life was boxing. In 1937 he fought in the semi-finals of a national competition organised by the *Daily Mail*. Newspaper reports stated that he hit his opponent so hard that he knocked him out of the ring.

'Danny Boy', as Douglas was known, was destined for a professional career in boxing, but the Second World War ended his dreams. He served in the Coldstream Guards initially, but was discharged after having appendicitis. He then enlisted with the 4th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment, 3rd Mortar Platoon, and was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Douglas married Violet Mary Digby in 1941, and they lived at Wrangle in Lincolnshire. He served in Norway, Iceland and undertook mountain-warfare training in Scotland.

It's possible that Douglas met Doreen while she was serving in the Military Police in Derby in 1943. Many of his close comrades attended an engineering course there, and it's likely he did, too.

Tragically, we discovered that not long after landing in France, Douglas was killed on 25 June 1944, at the age of 26. He was in an orchard in Fontenay-Le-Pesnel when a mortar bomb exploded. Douglas was buried in Tilly-sur-Seulles War Cemetery, about 10 miles west of Caen.

Dad had just discovered the truth about his father, and now he had to deal with a deep sense of loss. It's hard to grieve for someone you never knew, but through my research Dad felt a deep connection with Douglas.

We desperately tried to locate his medals, only to discover online that they'd been sold in 1997. I spent three years contacting auction houses and putting appeals on Facebook (**facebook.com**), hoping to find them.

A former soldier named Don saw my appeal on the Facebook page of the Royal Anglian Regiment, one of the Lincolnshire Regiment's successors (**facebook.com/TheRoyalAnglianRegiment**). He contacted me to say that he had Douglas' medals and would love to return them. Earlier this year, I met Don and bought them back.

On 22 June this year, as part of the D-Day 80 events, Dad and I will retrace Douglas' steps and pay homage to him and all of the fallen at Tilly-sur-Seulles. We will stand before the grave, and bestow to Douglas the honour that he never received in life.

Sonia managed to trace Douglas' medals and buy them back

HAVE YOU BROKEN THROUGH A BRICK WALL?

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

- Sonia has shared more pictures from her research on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's website For Evermore: Stories of the Fallen at **tinyurl.com/fe-doug**

Reader Tips

What advice does Sonia have for other family historians?

- Be tenacious – I search Google every day for Douglas' name, regiment and battalion to build a picture of his life.
- Don't delay when investigating a mystery. The hardest step towards the truth is the first.
- If your relation served in the military, there are countless groups on social media that search for missing medals.

Exploring London's Streets

Rosemary Collins talks to the researcher behind a website celebrating lost streets

Children outside a shop in Grange Walk near The Gatehouse, Bermondsey (1912)

London traces its origins back to Roman times; indeed it was the capital of Roman Britain. The city's geography has shifted over the centuries as it expanded to accommodate a dramatically growing population. Streets and buildings have been built, demolished and rebuilt, not least as a result of the Blitz. Because of this, many streets have changed their names and locations over the years.

In 2011, Londoner Scott Hatton started The Underground Map (**theundergroundmap.com**), a website aiming to map every street that has ever existed in the city. He also has a YouTube channel where he shares footage from his quest to walk between all of the London Underground stations to raise money for the charity Prostate Cancer UK (**youtube.com/theundergroundmap**).

The boundaries between boroughs can seem weird until you look at an old map

Scott says, "I have always wanted to revisit the areas I knew in previous years – how they developed, and how names changed over time. For example, the house I spent the first six months of my life in was not only demolished, but the land where it stood was converted into a park. I know from the comments I receive via the online form on my website, and from my social-media accounts, that others want to see the place where they grew up years ago, and where their parents and grandparents grew up. Often, after the Second World War, those streets no longer exist."

Scott's website enables visitors to compare maps of London's streets from 1750 to the 1950s. He is also sharing information about the streets' history, together with public-domain photographs of the city over the years. Visitors can contribute their own information, and request streets for Scott to locate. He writes about his charity walks on the site's blog, which provides more information about the history of the urban environment. In the course of the half-mile walk from Moorgate to Liverpool Street, for example, he points out sites such as Finsbury Circus Gardens, a park dating from 1812, and the Grade II-listed Britannic House, which was designed by influential architect Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944) for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company – the future BP.

"One interesting find," Scott reveals, "is that the boundaries between modern London boroughs can often seem weird until you look at an old map. For example, the boundary between Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is a ridiculously squiggly affair that seems completely random. However, on a map dating from the turn of the 19th century, you can see that the border was formed by the River Westbourne, a tributary of the Thames that has since been buried."

He's also interested in street-naming trends: "In the 19th century, many were royal names at first: countless King Streets, Queen Streets, George Streets and Charles Streets. Then it was aristocrats and prime ministers, especially if a battle was involved: all the Blenheims, Wellingtons and Palmerstons. In the 20th century, that behaviour largely stopped: the likes of Asquith Street, Thatcher Drive or Blair Road are few and far between."

Scott adds, "There are about 90,000 streets, past and present, within the current area of the M25, but 5,000 of them no longer exist. Many were swept away when new estates were built after the Second World War." As things stand, he's mapped about 88,000 existing streets and 2,543 former streets. His research is ongoing, but he admits, "I assume the project will never quite finish."

Find Out More

The Underground Map
w **theundergroundmap.com**

You can also follow Scott's site on social media via Facebook (**facebook.com/theundergroundmap**) and Instagram (**instagram.com/theundergroundmap**).

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your local history project with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *rosemary.collins@ourmedia.co.uk*

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Around Britain

Strathclyde

Jonathan Scott finds hidden gems and name-rich collections in central Scotland

Glen Rosa on the Isle of Arran, the largest island in the Firth of Clyde

GETTY IMAGES

A doctor and nurses attend a boy in a hospital in Glasgow. Records for local hospitals are held in the Mitchell Library

There are many archives and local-history libraries where evidence of your Strathclyde ancestors might survive. Modern Strathclyde was one of nine government regions created in 1975 and abolished in 1996. It covers six historic counties (Ayrshire, Buteshire, Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire) as well as parts of two more (Argyll and Stirlingshire).

Fortunately a great deal of research can be carried out remotely via the unrivalled collections at the government website ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**), home to statutory registers back to 1855; church registers; census returns; valuation rolls; poor-relief and migration records; kirk-session and other church records; prison registers; wills; and testaments.

The National Records of Scotland's Hall of Fame is a collection of about 300 case studies illustrating what can be achieved via ScotlandsPeople: **nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/hall-of-fame**. The entry relating to James Boswell (1740–1795), diarist, lawyer and biographer of English writer Samuel Johnson, is an especially instructive example.

Things become a little more complicated depending on the type of record you're after. Burghs are the foundations of local government in Scotland – the Royal Burghs of Rutherglen and Lanark were among the earliest, established in 1126 and 1140 respectively. The modern region of South Lanarkshire is covered by five burghs, and burgh records can touch on housing, licensing, courts, valuations and taxation.

South Lanarkshire's Archives and Records Centre in East Kilbride (**southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200165/local_and_family_history/588/archives_and_records/8**) looks after material for the East Kilbride and Hamilton burghs. The records for Biggar meanwhile are held at Lanark Library (**www.sllleisureandculture.co.uk/info/89/lanark_library**), and those for the Royal Burgh of Rutherglen, which include court records back to the 17th century, electoral registers, and the Incorporation of Weavers (1641–1866) and the Incorporation of Masons and Wrights (1636–1758), are at the Glasgow City Archives in the Mitchell Library (**glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/city-archives**). The holdings at this hugely important repository can be broadly divided into the City Collections, Special Collections and local National Health Service archives (covering hospitals in Glasgow, Dumbarton, Greenock and Paisley).

Burghs are the foundations of local government in Scotland

Some material held here is available at ScotlandsPeople, and since 2016 Ancestry's roster has included the collection 'Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, Electoral Registers, 1857–1962' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61020**).

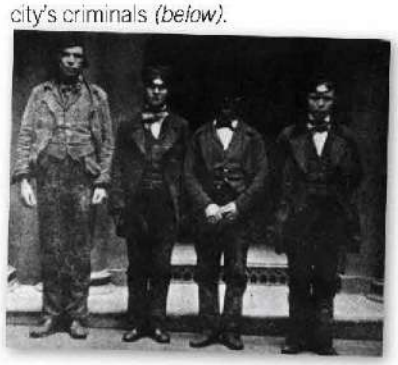
Sources at the Mitchell Library not yet available online include much of its extensive collection of

Strathclyde Through The Ages **Historical highlights from the region**

1722
Christian Shaw, daughter of the Laird of Bargarran, starts spinning fine linen thread. She later founds the influential Bargarran Thread Company.

1791
Robert Napier, who will become known as the "father of shipbuilding on the Clyde", is born in Dumbarton.

1819 Glasgow Police appoints its first detective Peter McKinlay to hunt the city's criminals *(below)*.



1868
Architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh is born at 70 Parson Street, Townhead, Glasgow. His portrait *(pictured)* is used on a commemorative £100 note issued by Clydesdale Bank in 2009.

GETTY IMAGES

newspapers, which stretch right back to the earliest – the *Glasgow Courant* of 1715. However, there are some finding aids available. During the First World War, the local *Evening Times* printed short biographies of service personnel from Glasgow and surrounding areas who were reported missing, wounded or killed. Entries usually included regiment, address, family names, occupation and often a photograph. Staff in the Special Collections department have indexed this Roll of Honour, which you can now explore via a series of free PDF spreadsheets available at **bit.ly/et-roll-honour**.

Dramatic Changes

Elsewhere in Strathclyde there are changes afoot. Since our last visit to Ayrshire, the county's archives team has moved into purpose-built headquarters in Ayr (**ayrshirearchives.org.uk/article/46884/Visiting-Us**). Plans to create a state-of-the-art library and museum for Dunbartonshire were approved in April last year, and Jennifer Lightbody, archivist at West Dunbartonshire Council, says that the current Dumbarton Library will become a community collections store and archive.

In Renfrewshire the archive team awaits the culmination of the £45 million Paisley Museum Reimagined project. The museum, which first opened its doors in 1871 but traces its origins back to the foundation of the Paisley Philosophical Institution in 1808, is set to reopen some time in 2025 – and you can keep track of progress via **reimagined.paisleymuseum.org**. So the county's archival business records, local-council minutes, and records of local clubs and organisations are currently unavailable to the public, although the Heritage Centre in Paisley remains open (**tinyurl.com/renfrew-heritage**).

You can go online to find out more about the local archive's projects and unusual sources. Heritage coordinator David Weir explains that staff are focusing on adding details to the online Paisley Poor Law index 1839–1948 (**tinyurl.com/paisley-poor**), but he also recommends readers investigate the underused Paisley Pamphlets: ephemera rich in ▶

Free Online Records

This month's selection includes Scottish Post Office directories, vaccination registers, a criminal database, and records from the First World War

Criminal Database
w **tinyurl.com/scot-ind-scd**

At the genealogical website Scottish Indexes you can search details of 800,000 criminals for free, including name, location and crime.

Roll Of Honour
w **bit.ly/et-roll-honour**

Here you can download indexes to First World War personnel from Glasgow and nearby reported wounded, missing or killed in the *Evening Times*.

Post Office Directories
w **digital.nls.uk/directories**

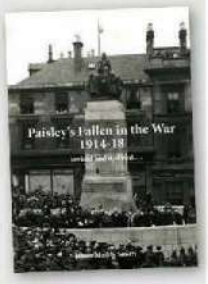
This National Library of Scotland site has more than 700 directories (1773–1911) covering most of Scotland.

Vaccination Registers
w **tinyurl.com/rcpsg-arch**

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow's extensive digital archive includes registers of inoculations and vaccinations, and anatomy-class rolls (1860–1874).

Paisley's Fallen
w **tinyurl.com/pais-fall**

This updated compendium of Paisley men who died during the First World War has been painstakingly researched and compiled by James Meikle Smith.



1871

David Colville & Sons is founded. The firm's Dalzell Steel and Iron Works in Motherwell becomes a major local employer for generations.

1872

The world's first international football match, played between Scotland and England, takes place at the West of Scotland Cricket Club's Ground in Partick, Glasgow, on 30 November. Sadly the match ends in a no-score draw.

1919

Tens of thousands of shipbuilding and engineering workers, striking in protest against long working hours, confront police in the Battle of George Square in Glasgow.

1929

A smoking film canister at the Glen Cinema in Paisley causes a panicked stampede that results in the deaths of 69 children.

GETTY IMAGES

Workers leave the Singer Sewing Machine factory at Kilbowie in Clydebank, c1900

▶ social history covering 1739–1893 (**tinyurl.com/paisley-pam**).

"Although we can't be 100 per cent certain, we are almost sure that this collection was the work of Robert Brown, Paisley historian, industrialist and one-time provost of Paisley."

The heritage team for Dunbartonshire has been working with Ancestry, which has digitised newspapers, valuation rolls and other name-rich sources such as church records, school registers, burial records and poor-relief records.

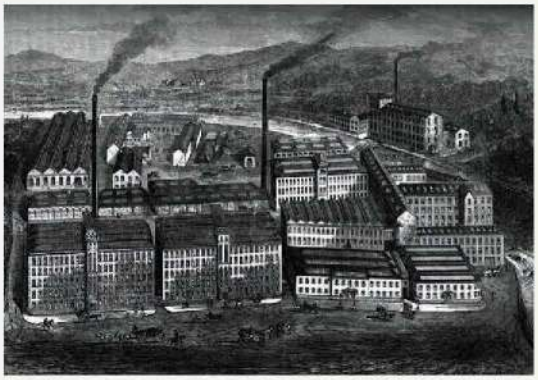
TOP TIP!

The National Library of Scotland offers free access to a wide range of historic Ordnance Survey mapping for all Strathclyde and the wider country (**maps.nls.uk**).

Some of the oldest documents here include 14th-century charters detailing the municipal business of the newly established Royal Burgh. Recent accessions include papers relating to local businesses such as shipbuilders William Denny and Brothers, Polaroid and Singer. The sewing-machine manufacturer was a major firm, which at its peak employed almost 16,000 people. And the Singer Sewing Machine Collection and Singer Archive was recognised as 'Nationally Significant' in 2013.

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Thread-Making Did your relation work in thread production in Strathclyde?



Clark & Co.'s thread works in Paisley, photographed c1880

Paisley became the centre of the thread-manufacturing world in the 19th century. The Paisley Thread Mill Museum (**paisleythreadmill.co.uk**) tells the story of the industry, from its origins in 1722 with Christian Shaw to the closure of the last mill in 1993. There are about 130 textile collections at Glasgow University's Scottish Business Archive, and you can see a breakdown via the guide at **gla.ac.uk/media/Media_116940_smxx.pdf**. Records of the firm Clark & Co., for example, include salary books, ledgers and registers of directors.

Note that the paper trails left by larger companies may involve several archives. For example North Lanarkshire's heritage centre (**culturenl.co.uk/museums/visiting-us/north-lanarkshire-heritage-centre**) has records for William Baird & Co., at one time the largest ironworks in Scotland. Ayrshire Archives (**ayrshirearchives.org.uk**) has lease books from William Baird's works in Lugar and Muirkirk. And some of the firm's other records are held by the University of Strathclyde's Archives and Special Collections (**tinyurl.com/uni-strath-arch**).

Important business collections also survive at the University of Glasgow, which looks after records from New Lanark, the 18th-century mill village set up by Richard Arkwright, as well as material relating to textiles firms that forms part of the Scottish Business Archive (**gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/archivespecialcollections/discover/business**). Finally the site Clyde Waterfront (**clydewaterfront.com**) tells the story of shipbuilding on the River Clyde.

GETTY IMAGES

Strathclyde Surnames

Are any of these in your family tree?

CLELLAND
This is the shortened form of the surname McClelland, which is itself shortened from the Scottish Gaelic Mac Giolla Fhaoláin.

DOCHERTY
The Lanarkshire census districts of Barony, Govan and Glasgow had the highest numbers of Dochertys at the time of the 1881 census.

GALLACHER
Glasgow was the British epicentre for Gallachers in the 1881 census. The more common Gallagher variant crops up most frequently in Lancashire.

HOUSTON
This is a Scottish locative name from the barony of Houston in Renfrewshire.

JARVIE
Jarvie is a relationship name that originated in the personal name Jarvis.

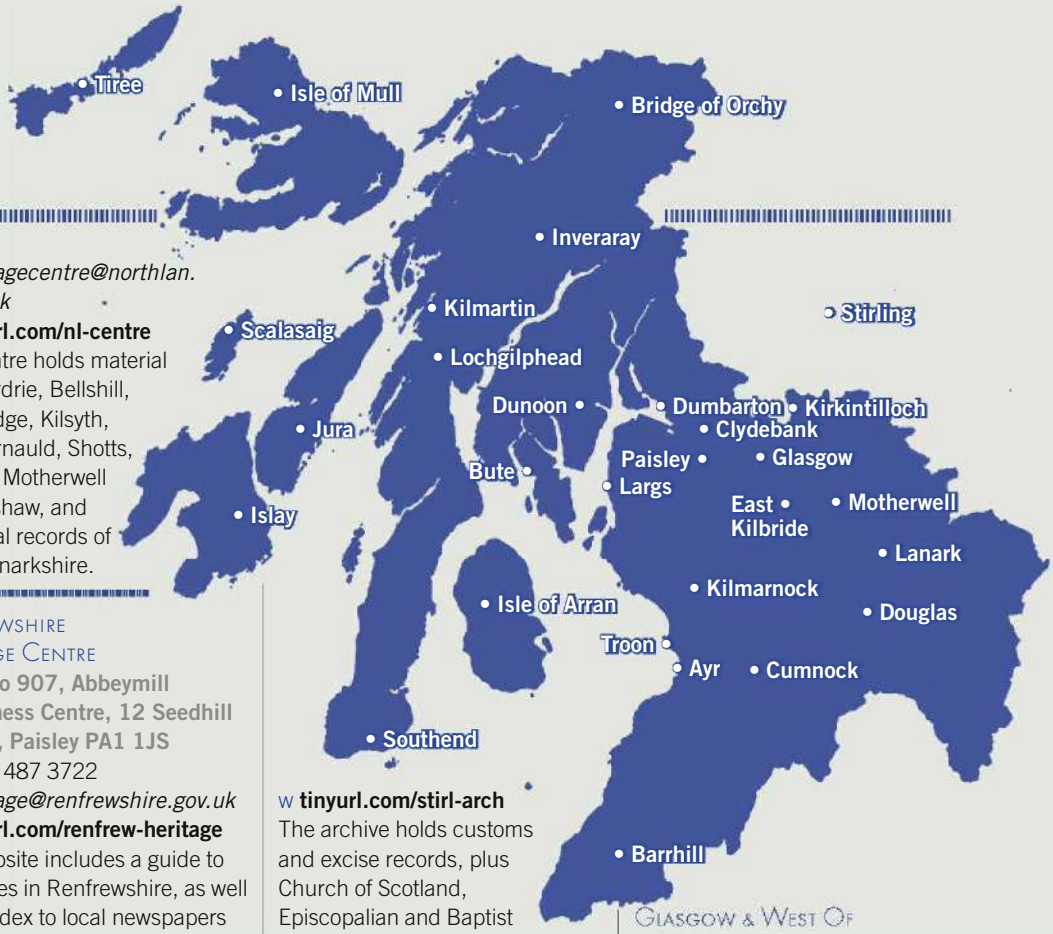
LAMBIE
Lambie comes from the Old Scandinavian personal name Lambi.

LOUDON
This locative name originated in Loudoun, a parish in the Cunninghame district of County Ayr.

PETTIGREW
This nickname for a small man, from the French *petit* ('small'), is associated with Lanarkshire.

POLLOCK
Pollock comes from Upper Pollock, Renfrewshire.

DIRECTORY



ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

Argyle Archives

a **Lochgilphead Community Centre, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8QU**
t 01546 604774
e *archives@liveargyll.co.uk*
w **liveargyll.co.uk/facility/archives**

The archive service looks after material relating to Argyll and Bute, including registers of electors, valuation rolls, poor-relief records, school-admission registers, and records created by estates, businesses and clubs.

Ayrshire Archives

a **South Harbour Street, Ayr KA7 1JA**
t 01292 616260
e *archives@south-ayrshire.gov.uk*
w **ayrshirearchives.org.uk**

Ayrshire Archives runs three research centres in Ayr, the Burns Monument Centre in Kilmarnock and the Townhouse in Irvine.

East Dunbartonshire Archives & Local Studies

a **William Patrick Library, 2–4 West High Street, Kirkintilloch G66 1AD**
t 0141 777 3142
e *archives@eastdunbarton.gov.uk*
w **edlc.co.uk/heritage-arts/archives**

The website includes research guides to poor relief, burials, schools and valuation rolls. The online catalogue is at **collections.edlc.co.uk/search/simple**.

Glasgow City Archives

a **The Mitchell Library, North Street, Glasgow G3 7DN**
t 0141 287 2910
e *archives@glasgowlife.org.uk*
w **glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/city-archives**

You can find out about the holdings here at **glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/family-history**.

North Lanarkshire Heritage Centre

a **High Road, Motherwell ML1 3HU**
t 01698 274597
e *heritagecentre@northlan.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/nl-centre**

The centre holds material from Airdrie, Bellshill, Coatbridge, Kilsyth, Cumbernauld, Shotts, Stepps, Motherwell and Wishaw, and historical records of NHS Lanarkshire.

Renfrewshire Heritage Centre

a **Studio 907, Abbeymill Business Centre, 12 Seedhill Road, Paisley PA1 1JS**
t 0141 487 3722
e *heritage@renfrewshire.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/renfrew-heritage**

The website includes a guide to resources in Renfrewshire, as well as an index to local newspapers (1824–1967) and a Paisley Poor Law index (1839–1948).

Scottish Jewish Archives Centre

a **Garnethill Synagogue, 129 Hill Street, Glasgow G3 6UB**
t 0141 332 4911
e *info@sjac.org.uk*
w **sjac.org.uk**

The collections here include minute books, registers and the Family Tree of Scottish Jewry database with details of more than 100,000 Scottish Jews.

South Lanarkshire Council Archives And Records Centre

a **32 Hawbank Road, East Kilbride G74 5EX**
t 01355 239193
e *archives@southlanarkshire.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/southlan-arch**

The centre's material includes records of the East Kilbride Development Corporation. There are also local and family history collections at Hamilton Town House Library, East Kilbride Central Library, Rutherglen Library and Lanark Library.

Stirling Archives

a **5 Borrowmeadow Road, Springkerse Industrial Estate, Stirling FK7 7UW**
t 01786 450745
e *archive@stirling.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/stirl-arch**

The archive holds customs and excise records, plus Church of Scotland, Episcopalian and Baptist records from Stirling and Clackmannanshire.

University Of Glasgow Archives & Special Collections

a **13 Thurso Street, Glasgow G11 6PE**
t 0141 330 5515
e *archives@glasgow.ac.uk*
w **gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/archives**

The holdings here include the Scottish Business Archive.

West Dunbartonshire Council Archives

a **Dumbarton Heritage Centre, Dumbarton Library, Strathleven Place, Dumbarton G82 1BD**
t 01389 608965
e *archives@west-dunbarton.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/westdun-arch**

The archive service also runs a heritage centre in the Vale of Leven, and will soon be opening a new state-of-the-art museum and heritage centre located in Clydebank Library.

GROUPS & SOCIETIES

East Ayrshire Family History Society

w **eastayrshirefhs.co.uk**

EAFHS has poor-relief indexes for Ardrossan and Kilmarnock, and kirk-session records for Kilmarnock Laigh Kirk.

Glasgow & West Of Scotland Family History Society

w **gwsfhs.org.uk**

The society sells transcriptions and memorial inscriptions.

Lanarkshire Family History Society

w **lanarkshirefhs.org.uk**

LFHS runs monthly webinars.

North Ayrshire Family History Society

w **northayrshirefhs.org.uk**

NAFHS holds monthly meetings at Largs Museum.

Renfrewshire Family History Society

w **renfrewshirefhs.co.uk**

The society's publications include memorial inscriptions and *Paisley Parliamentary Election 1868* with almost 3,500 voters' names.

Troon @ Ayrshire Family History Society

w **troonayrshirefhs.org.uk**

The society covers parishes in South Ayrshire.

WEBSITE

ScotlandsPeople

w **scotlandspeople.gov.uk**

The government's pay-per-view site includes statutory birth, marriage and death registers, Catholic and Old Parish Registers, and censuses (including 1921).

Prisoners' book, 1892–1910

Richard Meunier from Bath Record Office shares a book recording arrested criminals

Interview By Rosemary Collins

Discovering a criminal in your family tree is exciting and sometimes shocking. Historic records of the justice system are important for tracing our criminal ancestors. Bath Record Office (BRO) holds an example of one of the common forms of criminal record in the 19th century – a Bath City Police prisoners' book, recording people who were arrested and brought before the petty sessions. These were the lowest level of criminal court and dealt with people accused of small-scale crimes, often involving theft. BRO's manager Richard Meunier tells us more about the book.

How Did The Record Office Get The Book?

We received it from Bath City Police some years ago, a force that is now defunct – it was fortunate because I think the book was going to be thrown away in a skip. The people recorded were arrested and brought before the petty sessions, the equivalent of today's magistrates' court. It covers 1892–1910, so quite a long period, and there's a lot of people in there, something like 150–200. They can be searched by name on our online database Bath Ancestors (**bathancestors.org.uk**), and the actual entry can be ordered for a small charge.

It's fascinating to see how this level of the criminal-justice system worked

What Sorts Of Crimes Are Featured?

It's relatively minor stuff. Theft crops up: one man, John Collins alias John Whittaker, stole some boots and then a month later stole some trousers, broke into a shop, and broke into someone's house. False pretences appear as well, while one 16-year-old, Frank Davis, was accused of embezzlement in 1905, and in the same year a 28-year-old called Annie Williams was put up for larceny in Bath. None of these crimes was very serious, so they wouldn't have gone up to the quarter sessions or assizes court afterwards.

I should mention that the people arrested weren't necessarily permanent residents of Bath, because it was quite a transient place where people often lived for only a brief period. Some of them had already committed crimes elsewhere in the country too, as far away as Edinburgh or Newcastle, and those details are included.

Some of the convictions are quite interesting as well – you've got people convicted of stealing a top hat, stealing a garden spade, stealing 100 cigars, stealing a police uniform, or sending threatening letters. One man, William Clements, is described as an "incorrigible rogue". A mother-and-daughter duo, Jane and Annie Flint, are "wanted in many other parts of the country… they take belongings and make themselves acquainted with the Clergy and join the Church Guild and thus obtain several articles".

How Much Biographical Information Is Provided?

There are portrait photographs, which are very evocative; in some of the pictures, the subject is clearly being restrained. There's one chap who is dressed as a knight – presumably he's wearing fancy dress, but we don't really know.

Then you've got their name, their age, their height, even their hair colour and eye colour, their build, where they're from, and what they do as a job, if anything.

The book also includes their criminal record, so that will list what they've done, where they were brought before a court and their conviction, which tends to be anything from a day or a few days in prison to months of hard labour, indicated by "HL" after the sentence.

Why Did You Choose The Book As Your Gem?

I think it shows a different side to society. You won't often get this level of personal detail about people from the lower rungs.

Another benefit of the book is that a wide range of ages are represented. You've got people all the way from 16 years old to some quite elderly people who have committed crimes. Even children are represented.

When we have the book out and show visitors the entries, it really gets them talking, and the language used in the descriptions is strikingly of its period.

Finally, it's fascinating to see how this particular level

Visit Us

Bath Record Office: Archives And Local Studies
a Guildhall, High Street, Bath BA1 5AW
t 01225 477421
e *archives@bathnes.gov.uk*
w **batharchives.co.uk**

BRO is open Tuesday to Thursday, 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm, and 10am–1pm and 2pm–4.30pm on Fridays. All appointments must be booked at least 48 hours in advance.

of the criminal-justice system worked. There was no jury or anything like that; you just spent five minutes in the dock. It was a very different system back then compared with today, so I think it's really an example of how we've moved on.

What Other Records Does BRO Hold?

We look after quite a large collection overall. Since the Bath & North East Somerset unitary authority was created in 1996 we have taken in records for beyond the City of Bath, so we're probably a mid-sized county archive now. We've got records for the council and records for the mayor of Bath, although these days that's a ceremonial position rather than a political one.

We've also got the major Local Studies collections that were formerly held by Bath Central Library. A lot of these resources are relevant to family history including maps, reference books and directories; many of the books are very rare, being published in the late Victorian era or the early 20th century and donated by collectors.

We also hold records deposited by societies and clubs including sport clubs; family papers and estate papers; as well as records created by the police, hospitals, asylums and workhouses.

Finally there is an enormous collection of approximately 40,000 images from various sources, ranging from really early photographs taken around the 1840s and 1850s to quite recent ones, and including historic maps.

The images can be browsed, searched and purchased (as prints or digitally) via the website Bath In Time (**https://bathintime.co.uk**).

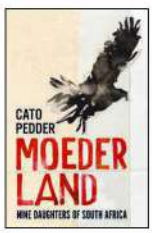
REVIEWS

The latest books on history and genealogy, plus apps, podcasts and websites

Cato Pedder tells the story of South Africa from the perspective of her female relations

MOEDERLAND NINE DAUGHTERS OF SOUTH AFRICA

Cato Pedder
John Murray, 368 pages, £22



Cato Pedder is a former newspaper reporter. Her great grandfather is Jan Smuts (1870–1950), once prime minister of South Africa, and she can trace her family line back to the time of the first settlers in that troubled country. But what makes this family biography remarkable is that Pedder leaves the men in the background. Instead, she focuses on the lives of nine women in her family, stretching back almost 400 years.

Pedder starts with Krotoa, a young Khoikhoi girl who was taken in by the Dutch commander Jan van Riebeeck's wife as a servant in the first days of Dutch settlement in the mid-17th century, and ends with an account of her aunt Petronella Clark's quiet rebellion against apartheid.

Men in this narrative are shadowy side-figures as women take centre stage. The challenges of domestic life, the importance of childrearing and the heartbreak of child-loss are all given their due prominence.

Where records of the women are slim, Pedder imagines their experiences, fleshing out details through research where she can. Later lives are filled out with information from family letters, diaries and memoirs.

Woven throughout the book is the evil of apartheid. How did South Africa end up following that path, and how does the author feel about her family's involvement?

Pedder also ponders the restrictions that women have faced for generations, and her own complicated relationship with both domesticity and motherhood.

Moederland is a fascinating read for anyone with an interest in the history of South Africa, but it also opens a door to an alternative way to talk about the past. As Pedder says, "When women's stories are left for dead in the archive, we lose the grain of daily life."

SARAH WILLIAMS **is the editor of** ***Who Do You Think You Are Magazine?***

CATO PEDDER / ALFRED GILLETT TRUST ARCHIVE

DIGITAL PICKS

Rosemary Collins highlights three digital resources that caught our eye this month

E-BOOK

Sunday Best

photo-consult.co.uk/books

Do you want to know more about how to date your family photographs? Photo restorer Stephen Gill's new book, described as a "pictorial chronology of photography and fashion", covers different types of Victorian photographs, dating advice based on the clothes worn, photo-restoration techniques and more, with plenty of illustrative examples. PDF or ePub format, £10.99.

LISTEN

Journeys To The Grave

tinyurl.com/bbc-jour-grave

In *Journeys to the Grave* from Radio 3's *The Essay*, contemporary writers describe their experiences visiting the graves of their literary heroes, reflecting on what is left behind by the dead of history. The authors celebrated across the 10 episodes include WB Yeats, Anne Brontë, Sylvia Plath, Mary Wollstonecraft and Ignatius Sancho. Free.

WEBSITE

Shropshire Archives

https://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk/posts/

This blog tells fascinating stories from Shropshire, illustrated by records and images that are held by the county repository. Recent posts include tales of crime from the archives; an exploration of historic photos of Charles Darwin's birthplace; and information about Samson, a gardener on a local estate who is the earliest recorded black person in Shropshire. Free.

Tracing Your Family History Using Irish Newspapers And Other Printed Materials

A Guide For Family Historians

IRELAND

Natalie Bodle
Pen & Sword, 128 pages, £12.99

Commencing with four case studies, illustrating the type of illuminating information that can be found in Irish newspapers, Natalie Bodle presents a very detailed directory over eight chapters, locating Irish newspapers and other printed material that might prove useful for the family historian who has Irish roots.

The initial chapters list the physical repositories where hard and microfilm copies of Irish newspapers can be found, with guides to their catalogues and finding aids, followed by a detailed account setting out where digitised Irish newspapers can be searched online. Bodle also devotes a chapter to publications containing extracts of birth, marriage and death notices from newspapers.

This is an excellent directory of sources, including some small and lesser-known collections, brought to light from far-flung corners of the island and the internet. Importantly, it covers the whole of the island of Ireland too.

However, this book is missing the tricks and tips that might benefit family historians, particularly when it comes to researching online material.

In addition, as Bodle herself admits, the majority of the Irish population, the poor landless labourers, are unfortunately far less likely to appear in these sources, which largely document the landed, wealthy and merchant classes of Ireland.

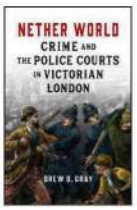
Nicola Morris is a director of Irish genealogy company Timeline Research (timeline.ie) and has consulted and appeared on numerous episodes of *Who Do You Think You Are?* over the years

Reader Review YOUR CHANCE TO ASSESS THE LATEST BOOKS

Nether World Crime And The Police Courts In Victorian London

CRIME

Drew D Gray
Reaktion, 352 pages, £16.99



Nether World by Drew D Gray details, through court records and newspaper reports, how being accused or convicted of a crime in 1800s Britain affected the working classes after the founding of the police service and the police courts.

The introduction gives background and historical data that would clutter the text if included in the main part of the book. The rest of the chapters cover different types of crime and criminals: from relatively minor offences such as drunk and disorderly, to more serious ones like homicide. A couple of chapters deal specifically with the treatment of juveniles and women when judged by middle-class men with a natural bias towards them. In each chapter, we meet characters who stood in the dock of a police court and whose story was interesting enough to feature in newspapers, and where details are available follow their cases through to conclusion in the Old Bailey.

Nether World is a good overview of the history of police courts, and the ideal starter for anyone who wants to delve further into the topic.

The fourth plate of George Cruikshank's 1847 series *The Bottle*, depicting an alcoholic begging for money

Dorcas Wilson, Linlithgow
Dorcas has been researching her family history for several years

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LEWIS WALPOLE LIBRARY

TV & RADIO

Jonathan Wright previews upcoming programmes on history and family history

Secrets Of The London Underground

Yesterday and UKTV Play
Tuesday 2 July, 8pm

Tim Dunn and Siddy Holloway return in the new series of *Secrets of the London Underground*

The London Underground has grown hugely since the opening of the Metropolitan Railway, which initially linked Paddington and Farringdon, in 1863. Today, with its 11 lines and 250 miles of track, it transports millions of passengers, both residents and visitors, around the capital, most of whom move through the system without giving any thought to the history of the Tube.

For a few souls, though, the creation of the Underground and its evolution over the past 160 years is a source of constant fascination. It's safe to say that rail historian Tim Dunn *(The Architecture the Railways Built)* and Siddy Holloway of London Transport Museum are not only among those who fall into this category, but both have a brilliant knack for communicating their knowledge and enthusiasm.

All of which makes it good news that *Secrets of the London Underground* is back for a fourth series, which again sees the duo being granted privileged access to a subterranean world of tunnels and rarely walked staircases, so that they can explore the London that lies beneath London.

In one of the episodes, for example, they get the keys to South Kentish Town, a disused station on the Northern Line's High Barnet branch between Camden Town and Kentish Town. South Kentish Town was closed in 1924, because so few passengers used it. Ghostly noises, our presenters discover, now emanate from its tunnels.

In the more familiar environs of Paddington and Waterloo, the two look at how, even in stations that have been updated for the 21st century, the past is often closer than many of us realise. They also go behind the scenes at a maintenance depot that keeps Victoria Line trains on the tracks, and pay a visit to the command centre overseeing the entire network.

Chris Nix, assistant director of London Transport Museum and a familiar face from previous series, will be acting as historical consultant, so we can also expect stories from the museum's archives to feature.

Olaug and her half-sisters Kari and May await their DNA tests in *Storyville*

Storyville: The Gullspång Miracle – A Nordic Mystery

BBC iPlayer
Streaming now

It's a story that begins with two sisters, Kari and May, buying an apartment in a small Swedish town, Gullspång. It should have been an everyday transaction but, as director Maria Fredriksson's documentary recounts, all that changed when the sisters met the seller, Olaug. She bore an uncanny resemblance to their half-sister, Lita, who killed herself in 1988. A DNA test proved Olaug was another half-sister.

But don't expect a cheery tale of family reunions. Real life is never that neat. This is a melancholy story of religiosity and the idea of suicide as a sin; the disruptions of the Second World War, at a time when twins were a source of fascination to the Nazis; and, perhaps most poignantly, mutual incomprehension.

Abandoned Engineering

Yesterday and UKTV Play
Began Monday 10 June, 8pm

The *Abandoned Engineering* cameras once again head for places that, while they might have been grand in their heyday, have fallen out of use and begun to moulder. In the latest run of eight episodes, highlights include a visit to Opa-locka City Hall in Florida, a fantastical building inspired, as improbable as this may seem, by the description of the palace in *One Thousand and One Nights*.

Other destinations include a refuge in Ireland that proved to be a house of horrors, and ruins in the deserts of Tunisia that once stood in the way of the Allies as they sought to drive the Germans and Italians out of North Africa.

On The Spot

Radio 4 and BBC Sounds
Sunday 30 June

With the UEFA European Football Championship under way in Germany, experience suggests that some of the most exciting games will culminate in penalty shootouts. As to who we can thank for this sporting drama, it's one William McCrum (1865–1932), an amateur goalkeeper who played for Milford Football Club in County Armagh.

Designed to limit the number of professional fouls, where defenders deliberately and illegally prevented attackers from scoring a goal, McCrum's solution, dubbed the 'Irishman's motion', was initially resisted. This was in part because it acknowledged how players might cheat, a notion that was anathema to Victorian ideals of sportsmanship. Ultimately, however, the penalty proved popular with players and fans.

The story of William, who was also heir to a linen fortune, is told in this one-off radio documentary by his great grandson, the writer Robert McCrum. It's not just a sporting tale, although the psychology of penalties certainly plays a big part, but also looks at the lives of Ulster settlers in the 19th century, who lived in Northern Ireland but had family roots in other parts of the British Isles. The penalty, argues Robert, could even be seen as a metaphor for people struggling against the historical odds.

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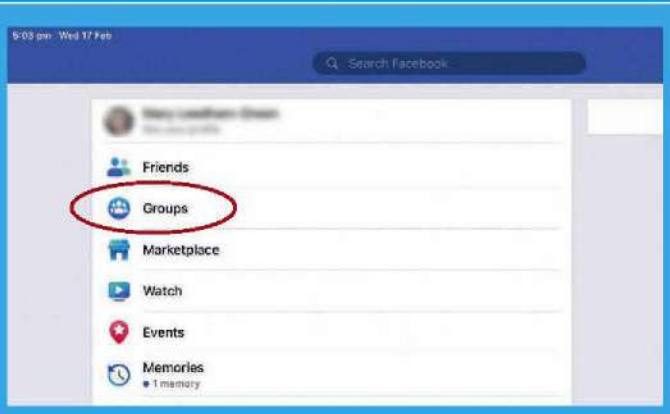

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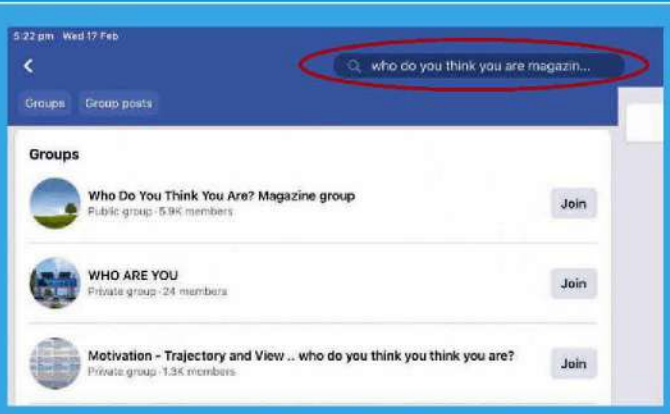

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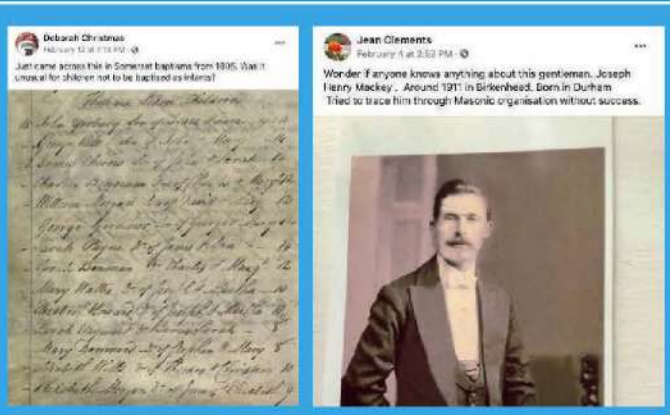

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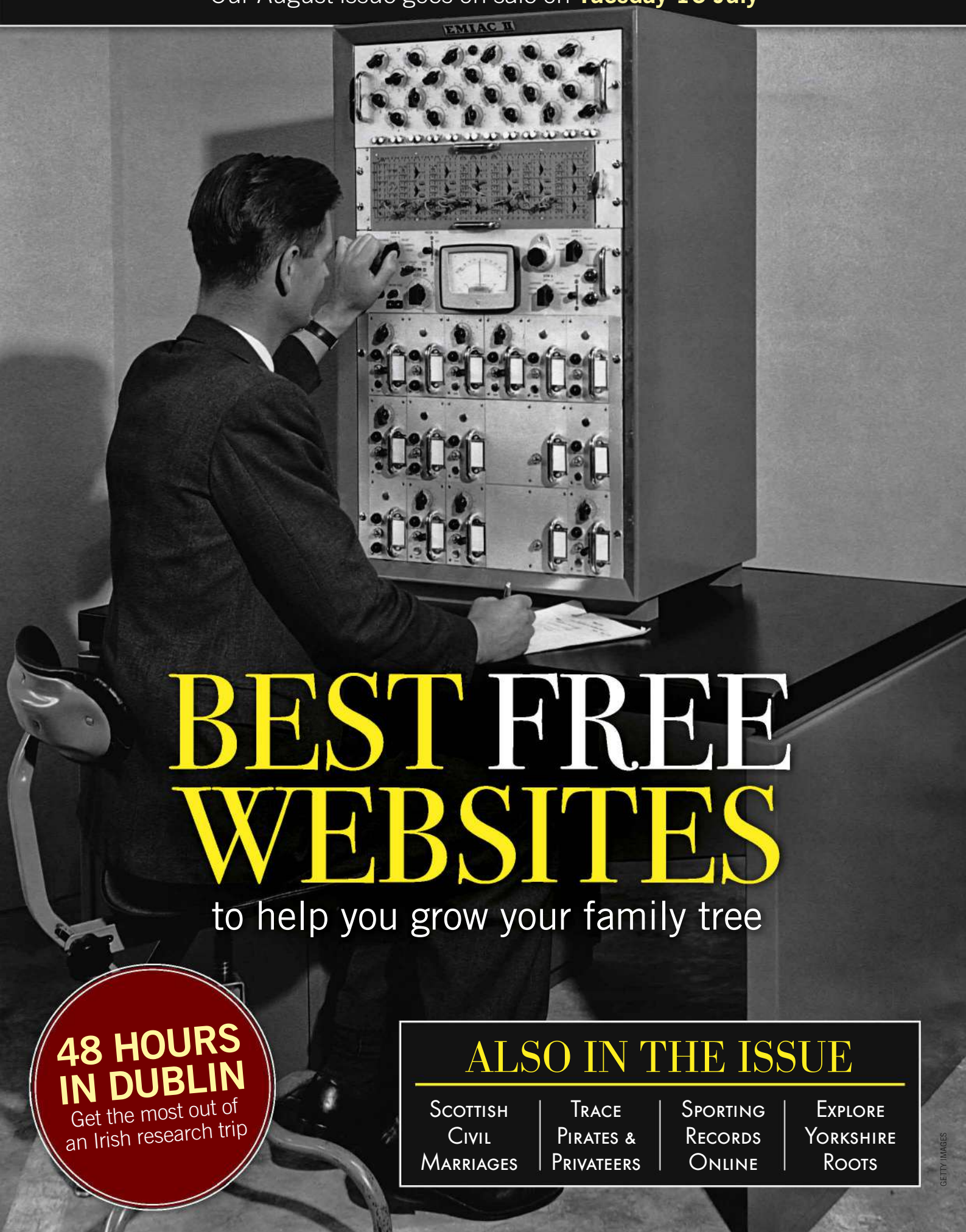

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'Alfred Was A Cinema Pioneer'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

Darren Vidler's great great uncle was a master of cinematography who toured Britain with an ingenious device that entertained thousands, says **Gail Dixon**

Cinema was one of the major world-changing innovations of the late Victorian era. From the mid-1890s, crowds flocked to music halls and converted shops to gaze in wonder at animated images.

Alfred Henry Vidler was a pioneer of British film-making who became so successful that he was able to found his own cinema. During his career he filmed and showcased events ranging from coronations and troop movements, to horse fairs and foundrymen.

Alfred is the great great uncle of Darren Vidler, who is fascinated by his relation's role in history. "After I discovered that Alfred was a cinematographer, I contacted a local researcher named Kate and she sent me a number of newspaper articles about him," Darren explains.

Alfred was born in 1864 in Maidstone, Kent, to sawyer Thomas Vidler and his wife Letitia. He attended school and began work at the age of 11 as an apprentice print compositor. His career as a printer's machinist and mender spanned about 35 years.

In 1884, he married Elizabeth Jane Carter in Reigate, Surrey, and they had two children, Elizabeth and James. Darren was intrigued to find a record on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) that revealed Alfred divorced Elizabeth for adultery in 1888.

Alfred had a lifelong fascination with the moving image, and in the 1890s bought a kinetoscope. This was essentially a cabinet within which a strip of photographic film showing a sequence of images passed rapidly before a light, creating the illusion that the subject is moving. The film could only be viewed by one person at a time via a peephole.

Alfred toured fairs and events across Britain with his kinetoscope, and found a captive audience. He later bought his own movie camera, and began projecting images onscreen.

He filmed beauty spots in Britain, and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

"He also recorded soldiers leaving for and returning from the Second Boer War, footage I'd really love to see," Darren reveals.

In the 1890s, Alfred moved to Lincoln for work and he would go on to transform the city's entertainment industry. Ever the innovator, he was recognised for showcasing 'singing pictures' in Lincoln in 1901, which were precursors of the 'talkies'.

To achieve this he bought a phonograph, to record and play back sound that he synchronised with the film. It was a complex and intricate process.

This enabled the public to be enthralled by song-and-dance acts from the USA, which they couldn't possibly see live. What's more, Alfred was years ahead of his time because Hollywood wouldn't begin releasing 'talkies' until 1927 with the Al Jolson vehicle *The Jazz Singer*.

In 1910, Alfred bought a theatre in Lincoln and renovated it to create a comfortable cinema with sound that could seat hundreds of people. The Grand Electric Cinema became a highly profitable venture, showcasing the films of Hollywood starlets such as Mary Pickford.

In 1920, Alfred married Kate Mabel Spencer in Lincoln. "He was clearly a hardworking and dedicated man. He was also teetotal and a member of Lincoln's Temperance Society."

Alfred enjoyed such success that he was able to retire comfortably in 1925. The film journal *The Bioscope* lamented the loss of such an innovator, and commented that "it was his life's ruling ambition to brighten the lives of the people".

During retirement, Alfred filled his days by visiting beauty spots, reading, entertaining friends, and experimenting with electrical and mechanical devices. He was interviewed by the press about his career, and wrote articles explaining how the "talkies talk".

He died in 1939, and many newspapers published tributes. "I'm very proud of Alfred and his pioneering work in the kinetoscope early film process."

DARREN VIDLER lives in Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, and is a driver for a car-parts company. He has been researching his family tree for 14 years

The local newspaper the *Lincolnshire Echo* published a tribute to Alfred in July 1939

Alfred bought a theatre in Lincoln and renovated it to create a cinema

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